Wace
The Hagiographical Works

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Andrew Colin Gow
Edmonton, Alberta

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Wace
The Hagiographical Works

The *Conception Nostre Dame* and the Lives of St Margaret and St Nicholas

Translated with Introduction and Notes by

Jean Blacker, Glyn S. Burgess
and Amy V. Ogden

With the Original Texts Included

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the most prolific of twelfth-century vernacular authors, Wace is best known for his two vernacular verse chronicles, the *Roman de Brut* and the *Roman de Rou*, but he is also the author of three surviving hagiographical works, the *Conception Nostre Dame* and the first French lives of St Margaret and St Nicholas.[1] Over the years the hagiographical writings have not received the scholarly attention they deserve and it is the aim of the present volume to rectify this situation by providing the materials required for further research. We print here, with a facing English translation, William Ray Ashford's edition of the *Conception Nostre Dame*, published in 1933, Einar Ronsjö's edition of the *Life of St Nicholas*, published in 1942, and Hans-Erich Keller's reconstruction of the *Life of St Margaret*, published in 1990. Each of the three works is accompanied in our volume by a separate introduction.

Wace was born in Jersey, probably sometime between 1100 and 1110. The date may well be closer to 1110, as it seems that he was still writing in the mid 1170s. As nothing definite is heard of him after ca. 1174, we can assume that he died between 1174 and the early 1180s. In the surviving manuscripts of his works his name occurs in a number of forms. In addition to the form Wace itself, we find Gace(s), Gasce, Grace, Guace(s), Vacce, Vace and Vuace.[2] We do not know how much of his boyhood he spent in Jersey, but even in his few early years there he may have acquired the interest in seafaring matters that is evident throughout his works. While still quite young, he was taken to the ducal capital Caen and sent to school there ('mis a letres', *Roman de Rou*, III, v. 5307), seemingly because there was no appropriate educational establishment in Jersey. In Caen he could have attended the school of the abbey of Saint-Étienne, which took boys from the secular world and educated them alongside those who were destined for the cloister (Judith Everard, 'Wace, the Historical

[1] Overall, Wace's surviving output of just under 36,000 lines is similar to that of the five Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

[2] Although it is not certain whether the name Wace was a personal name or a family name, it has recently been demonstrated that the first name 'Robert', which over the years has been widely used in connection with this author, was a misnomer (see Keller, 'Le Mirage Robert Wace'). See below for Wace's possible family connections. For full details of items cited in the introductions and notes, see the Bibliography.

Background', p. 10). Wace would have studied Latin at this school and perhaps it was at an early age that he learned to translate and adapt Latin narratives, an art that was to develop into such a fundamental part of his career as a writer.

The information that Wace was born in Jersey and studied in Caen comes from a passage in the *Rou* (III, vv. 5299–318). In the same passage he tells us that he was also educated for a long time in France, which at that time referred principally to the area now known as the Île-de-France. It is possible that he went to Chartres, but the schools in Paris provided the finest available education in theology and in the subjects of the *trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric), so it was probably in this enticing environment, which was developing as a new centre of royal government as well as of learning, that he qualified as a *magister*, thus acquiring the right to teach (*licentia docendi*). He subsequently returned to Caen, where, he tells us, he began to compose works in the vernacular. As vernacular literature already had a well-established tradition throughout the Norman and Anglo-Norman realm, Caen was presumably a place where translations and adaptations from Latin had more appeal than they did to the Latin-based intelligentsia in Paris. Unlike monks, who were obliged to write their chronicles and other works in Latin, Wace, as an independent, secular author, would have enjoyed greater flexibility.

One of Wace's best-known statements about himself is that he held the office of *clerc lisant* during the time of three Henrys: Henry I, Henry II and Henry the Young King (*Rou*, III, vv. 179–80). If this is so, he must have returned to Caen before Henry I's death in 1135. But Everard has suggested that he might have met Henry I in Caen before he went to France and that he therefore acted as *clerc lisant* only during the time of Henry II and the Young King Henry (*ibid.*). The post of *clerc lisant* seems to have been a secular one. Its duties are not clear, but they may well have involved studying, teaching, interpreting and reciting texts, plus various forms of administrative tasks, such as acting as a notary. Urban T. Holmes Jr thought that Wace's particular interest might have been the education of young people and that he could have maintained a psalter school or grammar school in Caen ('Norman Literature and Wace', p. 57).

Wace's later life is not of direct relevance to his early hagiographical writings, but any information we can gather helps us to understand his literary and clerical career as a whole. He presumably continued to live in Caen, but at some unknown date (probably in the mid or late 1160s) King Henry II granted him a prebend ('provende') in Bayeux (*Rou*, III, vv. 171–75, 5313–18). Just what this prebend consisted of is not clear. A prebend could

be an endowment of lands, churches or rights from the estates of abbeys or cathedrals. In Wace's case it seems to have been the status of non-dignitary canon at the cathedral of Bayeux.[3] As such, he may well have had no specific duties other than the requirement to be present to witness abbey transactions, but he might also have been obliged by Bishop Henry II (1165–1204) to attend monthly chapter meetings in Bayeux. The distance from Caen to Bayeux is less than thirty kilometres, so he could have continued to live in Caen.[4] We do not know why Henry gave Wace the prebend; it could have been a reward for the progress he had made on the *Rou* or a belated acknowledgement of his earlier *Roman de Brut*, which had been completed in 1155.

Scholars seeking further confirmation concerning Wace's presence as a cleric in Caen or Bayeux have long had recourse to several charter attestations that include the name Wascius (or variants). There are four charters of interest from the cartularies of the cathedral of Bayeux (printed as *Livre noir*), and of the priory of Le Plessis-Grimoult and the abbey of Saint-Martin de Troarn, which remain in manuscript. These attestations have recently been examined by Everard, who has re-dated them where necessary and printed summaries and witness lists.[5] The earliest occurrence (although it survives in a much later document) is an agreement, dated February 1169, between Bishop Henry II of Bayeux and Abbot Gislebert of Saint-Martin de Troarn, resolving a dispute over the benefices and churches that formed the liberty of the abbey. A Wacius (the form in the text is Wacio, as attestations are recorded in the ablative case) is among the witnesses named as canons. In another of Bishop Henry's charters, now dated ca. 1170–73, a magister Wacius is a witness to the confirmation

[3] The cathedral of Bayeux had extensive holdings, so, if lands were involved they could have been elsewhere in the Bessin or even in Caen. In his first reference to the prebend Wace states that King Henry had it given to him ('cil me fist doner . . . une provende', *Rou*, III, vv. 173–74) and in the second reference that it was simply given to him by Henry ('m'en fu donee . . . une provende', III, vv. 5315–16). The process itself is not clear. King Henry himself would presumably not have been able to make someone a canon directly, but he could have asked Bishop Henry to do so. Everard comments that Wace's prebend would have 'secured his financial situation' ('Wace, the Historical Background', p. 3). In an early passage in the *Rou* Wace tells us that prebends were the means by which clerics lived ('E provendes dunt il vivreient', III, v. 714; the context here concerns the prebends granted by Duke Richard I for his own foundation, Fécamp).

[4] In its regular business the cathedral would have dealt with such things as property transactions with other religious houses or confirmations of donations by benefactors.

[5] Everard, 'Charter Attestations by Canon Wace'. For earlier work on these attestations, see especially Édélestand Du Méril, 'La Vie et les ouvrages de Wace', pp. 6–7, and Ronsjö's edition of the *Life of St Nicholas*, pp. 17–18.

by the bishop of Bayeux and others of the privileges and possessions of the regular canons of the priory of Le Plessis-Grimoult. This wording conforms to Wace's designation of himself as 'Maistre / Mestre Wace'.[6]

A Wascius is a witness in a charter that confirms the settlement on 14 July 1174 of a dispute between Richard Du Hommet and the cathedral of Bayeux with regard to the church of Carcagny. The existence of a fourth charter, not previously noted but now printed by Everard, has been pointed out by David S. Spear.[7] Here a Wanceius is a witness to a charter of Bishop Henry confirming the award to Thomas of Amfréville, canon of Bayeux, of certain revenues from fishing.[8] However, both the date of this attestation (Everard states that it could be as early as 1175 but also as late as 1191) and the form of the name (Wanceius) make it less likely that the testator in this case is our poet. Thus, if we accept just the first three charters, in which the forms Wacius and Wascius are found, and leave aside the Wanceius of the fourth charter, nothing more is heard of our author after the middle of the 1170s.[9]

What of Wace's links to known individuals or families? In the *Rou* he makes a reference to his father, whom as a boy he heard say that the number of ships that set off from Saint-Valéry in preparation for the invasion of England was seven hundred less four (III, vv. 6423–28). Was he then the son or grandson of a ship-builder who worked on William's invasion fleet? Or, more likely, did his father just hear this information from someone who was involved in some capacity? There is a further piece of tantalising evidence. Does Wace say that his maternal grandfather or great-grandfather was Turstin [or Thurstan], chamberlain to William the Conqueror's father, Robert the Magnificent of Normandy (1018–35)? The relevant passage is *Rou*, III, vv. 3223–25. In MS A (British Library, Royal 4 C.XI) Wace states that 'Tosteins, ki *ert* ses chamberlencs, / De sa chambre

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[6] See the *Conception Nostre Dame* (v. 2), the *Life of St Nicholas* (v. 1546) and the four examples in both the *Brut* (vv. 7, 3823, 13282, 14866) and the *Rou* (*Chronique Ascendante*, v. 3, II, v. 443, III, vv. 158, 11439).

[7] *The Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals during the Ducal Period* (p. 83).

[8] Thomas of Amfréville was one of those who attested with Wace the charter of Richard Du Hommet.

[9] In a charter dating from 1172, included by Du Méril (p. 6) but not by Everard, Bishop Henry confirms the privileges and possessions of the abbey of Saint-Étienne in Caen. One of the testators here is a 'magister Accius canonicus'. Holmes states that Accius 'must be equivalent to "Waccius" ' (p. 60), but it is more likely that the individual involved here was Azo subdecanus, whose name is found as a witness, together with that of Wace, to the charter of Richard Du Hommet mentioned above (see Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 'Wace as Historian', p. 106 n. 17).

maistre gardeins /—De par sa mere fu sis aives' ('Turstin, who was his chamberlain, chief guardian of his chamber, was his ancestor [grandfather / great-grandfather] through his mother', ed. Anthony J. Holden). The phrase 'was his ancestor through his mother' ('de par sa mere fu sis aives', v. 3225) is ambiguous and does not appear to make sense, since it is difficult to believe that Duke Robert I's chamberlain was his ancestor on his mother's side, although it is possible. Scholars have tended to read this passage as referring to Wace, supported in part by the reading in MS B (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 375): 'De par sa mere fu mis auves' ('was my ancestor through his mother'). This reading can also be seen as ambiguous, and it led Gaston Paris to suggest emending the line to read 'de par ma mere fu mi aives' ('was *my* ancestor through *my* mother') (our italics). This emendation carries a good deal of conviction, but it cannot be regarded as indisputable.[10] So whether Wace was related to Turstin, as grandson or great-grandson, must remain speculation.

Wace could have been connected to the Wac / Wach / Vac family, which held lands not only in Jersey and Guernsey, but also in the Bessin, the Cotentin and parts of England. One member of this family was a Roger Wac, who in 1154 held lands in St Jean des Chênes in Jersey from the abbey of Saint-Sauveur in the Cotentin and has previously been noted as possibly connected to Wace.[11] Also named in earlier studies is a later canon of Bayeux, Richard Wace. There is no direct evidence linking Richard Wace with Roger Wac, or linking our author to either of them, but Valentine Fallan has suggested that 'if Wace was (or thought he was) a family member this would present a cohesive picture of the many co-incidences of names and holdings' found in the *Rou* ('Master Wace', p. 66).[12] Canon Richard, whose name occurs in the form Ricardus Wacii ('Richard son of Wacius'), could have been the poet's son (or nephew). If Wace were in lower orders, he would have been able to marry.

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[10] Gaston Paris, 'Sur un épisode d'Aimeri de Narbonne', pp. 526–27; see also his review of Hugo Andresen's edition of the *Rou*, pp. 595, 610 (in this edition the relevant line is v. 3239). Holden states that it is perhaps necessary to accept this unconfirmed emendation (ed., vol. 3, p. 225) and he adds that such a personal intervention would be in keeping with Wace's character. Van Houts declares herself to be 'in favour of accepting Paris's attractive hypothesis' ('Wace as Historian', p. 104). The Old French term *aive* has the general sense 'ancestor, forebear', but it can be taken to mean 'grandfather', which is the meaning given by Holden in his glossary (vol. 3, p. 310).

[11] See, for example, Glyn S. Burgess, introduction to *Wace, the Roman de Rou*, p. xix n. 21.

[12] Valentine Fallan, 'Master Wace: A Cross-Channel Prosopographer for the Twelfth Century?'.

In her wide-ranging research into the people and places mentioned in the *Rou*, Fallan has identified several individuals of different generations with the surname Wac (sometimes Wach, Wasce or Vac). She has demonstrated that most are related to the Roger Wac who held the fief of St Jean des Chênes in Jersey. The members of the Wac family include Joffredus Wac (a benefactor, ca. 1068–1066, of the priory of Saint-Gabriel in the Bessin) and, in the twelfth century, Goffredus Wac (a testator in a settlement concerning the canons of Bayeux, dating from 1135–1139), Eustacius Wac (a witness to an undated gift of a chapel in Dorset) and Hugh Wac, lord of Rubercy (a commune in Calvados, thirteen kilometres north of Bayeux). Hugh is of particular interest. A prominent knight in the *Rou* is a 'sire de Reberchil' ('lord of Rubercy', III, v. 8647) and Wace is the earliest source for this holding. In the mid-twelfth century the seigneur of Rubercy was Hugh Wac, also by marriage lord of a barony with its seat at Bourne in Lincolnshire.[13] Fallan reports the evidence that he was the brother or half-brother of Roger Wac of Jersey. Further research is required, but the fact that in the *Rou* he grants his support to, and gives prominence to, combatants unknown in 1066, but who have now been identified as his own contemporaries and even neighbours, suggests that Wace was at the very least a member of the same feudal milieu as some distinguished landowners within Normandy, England and the Channel Islands.

If we move on from what we have been able to glean about Wace's life and background in order to take a broad look at his career as a writer, it would seem that he began to compose vernacular works after his return from France to Caen. In the *Rou* he twice mentions writing satirical or political poems called *sirventeis*, but these have either not survived or have not yet been identified (II, v. 4148, III, v. 153).[14] Such poems may have been rather slight for a person of his disposition. On both occasions that he mentions *sirventeis* he also refers to *romanz*, by which he presumably means more substantial works in the vernacular language. One can assume that they were translations and adaptations from Latin sources.[15]

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[13] See Edmund King, 'The Origins of the Wake Family: The Early History of the Barony of Bourne in Lincolnshire', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 5 (1975), 167–76. Hugh had a career of increasing prosperity in England from ca. 1139; he died in 1176.

[14] Holmes suggests that these poems 'were allowed to disappear because they were critical of the wishes of the King, and encouraged Norman opposition' ('Norman Literature and Wace', p. 84).

[15] 'Mais (o)re puis jeo lunges penser, / Livres escrire e translater, / Faire rumanz e serventeis' ('But now I can put in a great deal of effort, write and translate books and compose *romanz* and *serventeis*', *Rou*, III, vv. 151–53); 'A Chaem lunges conversai, / De romanz

We are still a long way from what later authors and modern scholars will call 'romances', i.e. especially the stories of love and chivalry composed by Chrétien de Troyes and his contemporaries, but the notion of composing in 'romanz' ('in the vernacular' / 'in French') remained with Wace throughout his career. His stated aim for the *Nicholas* is to recount 'en romanz' a little of what the Latin text says, so that laymen who do not know Latin can learn of it (vv. 41–44). This could certainly be said to be the aim of all our three poems.[16]

Information concerning dates of composition and other issues relating to the three works included in this volume will be found in the respective introductions. Taken as a group, the period of composition has traditionally been seen as 1130 to 1150, but these dates remain open for discussion. The *Nicholas* was almost certainly the last to be composed, but the order of composition for the *Conception Nostre Dame* and the *Margaret* has not been established with certainty. Both texts are commonly dated to the period 1130–1140, with the *Margaret* frequently being considered as the earlier of the two narratives, in particular on stylistic grounds. However, it will be shown below that such grounds are not trustworthy. With regard to the date of the chronicles, Wace himself tells us at the end of the *Brut* that it was completed in 1155, but a work of this length (14,866 lines in Ivor D. O. Arnold's edition) would have been started several years earlier.

We know that Wace began the *Rou* in 1160 (*Chronique Ascendante*, vv. 1–4).[17] At some stage, perhaps around the early or middle 1160s, he stopped working on it, only resuming his task somewhat later, perhaps around 1170. The *Chronique* (v. 62) mentions the Siege of Rouen, an historical event that took place in 1174 and, although we have no precise conformation of this, Wace could have abandoned the *Rou* at around this date. In the final lines of the *Rou*, he tells us that King Henry II withdrew his patronage and commissioned a new version by a Maistre Beneeit, probably the Benoît de Sainte-Maure who a few years earlier had composed the *Roman de Troie* (III, vv. 11420–24). But we do not know why Henry chose

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faire m'entremis' ('I stayed in Caen for a long time and set about composing *romanz*', III, vv. 5310–11).

[16] For the expression 'en romanz', see *Margaret*, v. 739, *Nicholas*, vv. 37, 39, 41, 1548, 1552, and *Rou*, vv. 5298, 5300. See also the note to *Nicholas*, v. 37. In spite of their modern titles, the *Roman de Brut* and the *Roman de Rou* still rely heavily on Latin sources and are fundamentally chronicles composed 'en romanz'.

[17] The *Chronique Ascendante des ducs de Normandie* provides a summary of the *Rou* in reverse chronological order, but its status within Wace's *œuvre* and its date of composition remain uncertain: is it part of the *Rou* or a separate work; did Wace actually write it?

to act in this way. There are various possible explanations, the simplest of which is that he thought Wace was becoming too old to continue.[18] At this stage he had probably been composing vernacular works for well over forty years, yet he clearly still thought he had more output left in him. By the time he finished writing, romance as a genre was in full swing (and he himself had a significant influence on it),[19] saints' Lives were enjoying great popularity and, following in the footsteps of Geffrei Gaimar, who had written his *Estoire des Engleis* in the 1130s (its recent editor, Ian Short, dates it to between March 1136 and April 1137, p. xii), he had completed two lengthy historical works. Thus Wace's range is noteworthy. He had been a *clerc lisant* and a recognised author for nearly a half-century and he was certainly, in addition to his contribution to the development of romance, a pioneer in at least two major genres: hagiography and chronicle.

The published editions are printed here without emendation (with the exception of the *Conception Nostre Dame*, v. 658, and the *Margaret*, vv. 313, 349). For the sake of consistency of presentation, a uniform system of quotation marks is used for all three texts and line numbers are placed to the left of the text and folio numbers to the right. Ashford and Ronsjö provide variant readings at the foot of each page of their text, but these are not reproduced here. Keller did not include variants with his reconstruction of the original text of *Margaret* as it follows his synoptic diplomatic editions, with accompanying variants, of the three extant manuscripts (pp. 55–95). We have provided information concerning the various stages of the reconstruction in 'Notes to Keller's Text' (pp. 230–34), which lists the principal variants. Wherever possible, the parallel translation aims to render each word of the relevant line. Occasionally, however, to improve the flow, a connecting particle such as 'and' or 'yet' is inserted. Although Old French narratives frequently alternate between the present and the past tense, in our translations the events are, for the sake of uniformity, recounted in the past tense. An asterisk in the text indicates the presence

[18] Perhaps Wace preferred truth to the propaganda desired by his patron, perhaps he showed favouritism towards Henry I's brother, Robert Curthose, who disputed his right to the throne, or perhaps Wace's progress was just frustratingly slow and Henry II's patience ran out (see Burgess, *Wace, The Roman de Rou*, pp. xiv–xv, paperback version, pp. xii–xiii, and Jean Blacker, ' "La geste est grande" '). Whatever the reason, we know that Wace was not happy to be cast aside in favour of a rival. He brings his work to an end on a somewhat disgruntled note and with an enigmatic final statement: 'Quin velt avant faire sin face' ('Anyone who wants to do more, let him do it', III, v. 11440).

[19] On Wace's influence on romance, see especially Margaret M. Pelan, *L'Influence du Brut de Wace sur les romanciers français de son temps*.

of a note relating to the establishment of the text and an asterisk in the translation indicates the presence of a note relating to the interpretation of the text. Biblical references are to the Vulgate; New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) references are given in cases where they differ.

Although the three named authors have collaborated on all sections and take collective responsibility for the volume as a whole, the primary authors are as follows: Jean Blacker, Introduction and Notes to the *Conception Nostre Dame*, General Conclusion; Glyn Burgess, the General Introduction, the translations, the Bibliography and the Indices; Amy Ogden, Introduction and Notes to the Lives of St Margaret and St Nicholas. Glyn Burgess has also acted as General Editor.

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CONCEPTION NOSTRE DAME

INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts and Editions

The *Conception Nostre Dame* consists of five parts: (1) the *Établissement de la Feste de la Conception Nostre Dame* (vv. 1–178); (2) the *Conception* itself (vv. 179–1110); (3) transition section (vv. 1111–34); (4) the *Histoire des Trois Maries* (vv. 1135–292); (5) the *Assomption* (vv. 1293–810).[1] The text has been preserved in nine complete, or nearly complete, manuscripts and sixteen fragments; the sigla are William Ray Ashford's (ed., pp. vii–xii) unless otherwise noted, with further details added as a result of recent research.[2]

1. **A** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BNF), fr. 19166, f. 186v, col. 2–200v, col. 2. Thirteenth century. Francien.
2. **C** Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine (Bibliothèque Municipale), 473, ff. 127–139. Mid-thirteenth century. Francien. Contains the entire poem up to line 1576.
3. **M** Paris, BNF, fr. 25532, f. 320r–331v. Thirteenth century. Francien.
4. **P** Paris, BNF, fr. 1526, f. 31r–40v, 138r–142v. Thirteenth century. Francien. A largely complete manuscript containing the three longest sections of the poem, the *Conception*, the *Histoire des Trois Maries* and the *Assomption*.
5. **S** Paris, BNF, fr. 24429, f. 73r–83v. Fourteenth century. Francien. (According to Ashford, p. viii, the same text as in MS V).
6. **T** Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, 927, f. 61r–108v. Second quarter of the thirteenth century. Southern French copy of an Anglo-Norman original. Also contains the *Life of St Margaret* (MS M).

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[1] The title *Assomption* will be used throughout to refer specifically to this section of Wace's poem. On anonymous (verse) versions of the Assumption narrative, including that sometimes attributed to Gautier de Coinci, see nn. 14, 52 and 60 below.

[2] Including Jean Blacker's unpublished findings. See also Ruth J. Dean and Maureen Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 269–70, 332, and Françoise H. M. Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 32–34, 155. For MSS ACMPSV and fragments JRZ Ashford gives 'Central French'. We have endeavoured to be more precise and are grateful for the advice of Ian Short on this matter.

7. **V** Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Regina 1682, f. 58r–69v. Second half of the fourteenth century. Francien. (According to Ashford, p. viii, the same text as in MS S).
8. Paris, BNF, nouv. acq. fr. 13521, f. 71r–93r. Late thirteenth century. Contains the entire poem, with interpolations of the shorter version of the *Histoire de Marie et de Jésus* and the *Passion des jongleurs*. Francien. Unknown to Ashford.[3]
9. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Patetta 74, f. 108r–125r, 140v–151v. Fifteenth century. North-Eastern. Unknown to Ashford.[4]

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[3] See Boulton, 'The Manuscript Tradition of the *Histoire de Marie et de Jésus*', pp. 63–66.

[4] The Patetta manuscript is nearly complete, though lines 1675–796 are missing (lines 1797–810 [end] appear between lines 1110 and 1111); a 934–line interpolation of religious texts occurs between lines 1004 and 1005, f. 125r–140v. Fragments are as follows, with sigla assigned by Ashford unless otherwise noted: (1) **B** London, BL, Additional 15606, f. 37r–38v, 43r–50v, 77r–81r [the folios have been renumbered since the Library catalogue and Ashford's edition were published; consequently, counts based on sources predating the renumbering are off by one folio, e.g. 36r should be 37r etc.], *Etablissement*, *Conception* (to line 1004) and *Assomption*, 14th century, Eastern (Burgundy); (2) **J** Cambridge, St John's College, B.9 (31), f. 1r–2r, 48r–53r, *Etablissement* (1–174), last 6 lines of the *Trois Maries* and the *Assomption* (lines 1287–1810), early 14th century, Anglo-Norman; (3) **K** Paris, BNF, fr. 25439, f. 188v–193v, transition section, *Trois Maries* and fragment of *Assomption* (lines 1293–1452), 13th century, Eastern (Lorraine); (4) **L** Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 739 (645), f. 11–13, *Assomption*, 14th century, Picard; (5) **N** Paris, BNF, Moreau 1716, *Etablissement*, *Conception* (up to line 1004) and *Assomption*, 18th century; (6) **O** Oxford, University College, 100, f. 100r–109v, *Trois Maries* and *Assomption*, late 13th century, Anglo-Norman; (7) **Q** Paris, BNF, fr. 1504, f. 417–421, *Etablissement*, 18th century; (8) **R** Paris, BNF, fr. 818, f. 4v, col. 2–12r, col. 2, *Etablissement* and *Conception*, 13th century, Eastern (Burgundy / Lyonnais); (9) **W** Paris, BNF, lat. 5002, f. 117v, lines 1111–55 (transition section and the opening lines of the *Trois Maries*), 14th century, Eastern (Burgundy); (10) **X** Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3516, f. 52r–53v (the folios have been mutilated), transition section, *Trois Maries* and *Assomption* (to line 1796), probably 1267 or 1268, Picard (also contains the *Life of St Nicholas*, MS A); (11) **Z** Paris, BNF, fr. 1527, f. 1r–10r, *Etablissement* and *Conception* (up to line 1002), 13th century, Francien; (12) **E** Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1473, f. 38r–42v, two lines of the transition section (1133–34), *Trois Maries* and *Assomption*, second half of the 13th century, northeast of Paris, Picard traits (Hans-Erich Keller, 1975, pp. 96–97; Keller's siglum; unknown to Ashford; (13) **G** Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, L.II.19, f. 12v–17v, transition section, *Trois Maries* and *Assomption*, with some lacunae, late 13th–early 14th century, Italian copy of Picard original (Keller, 1975, p. 95; Keller's siglum, 1975; unknown to Ashford); (14) London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A.X, f. 123v–127r, last 6 lines of the transition section and fragment of the *Trois Maries* (1129–1203), late 13th century, Anglo-Norman (unknown to Ashford); (15) London, BL, Royal 2 A.IX, f. 101r–114v, last 5 lines of the transition section, the *Trois Maries* and *Assomption*, 13th century, Anglo-Norman (unknown to Ashford); (16) Paris, BNF, Duchesne 79, f. 84v, 85v, *Etablissement*, 17th century (unknown to Ashford); also contains the *Roman de Rou*. Two more fragments have been associated with Wace: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1137 (51), f. 120r–129r, lines 1283–84 and 1287–1300 of the *Trois Maries* and a version of the *Assomption* (see below), 14th century (collated by Ashford but not assigned a siglum) and Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 593,

The *Conception Nostre Dame* (hereafter *CND*), was first published by Georges Mancel and Guillaume-Stanislaus Trébutien in 1842. Their edition is based on MS M, with some variants from S and Z; it also includes an Appendix containing potential Latin sources used by Wace, plus ancillary materials (pp. 87–224). The *CND* was published again in 1859 by Victor Luzarche, who based his edition on T (see pp. v–xviii). The standard edition, the third and last to be published, is Ashford's. Originally a University of Chicago dissertation (1932), this edition appeared in 1933 and is reprinted below. Also, based on T, it includes variants from the eighteen manuscripts known to him.[5] The poem has not previously been translated.

Date, Author, Patronage

The *Conception Nostre Dame*, probably written between 1130 and 1140 (Ashford, ed., p. xvi) is usually considered to be the second of Wace's three hagiographical texts although it may slightly precede or be contemporaneous with the *Life of St Margaret*.[6] Based primarily on apocryphal sources, written at the height of the English revival of the feast of the Conception and contemporaneous with the earliest French resistance (that of St Bernard), the *CND* provides the earliest extant Old French treatment of the conception, birth, death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and as such occupies an important place in the development of the

f. 90v, col. 1–f. 92v, col. 3, a version of the *Assomption* (see below), dated 1304 (collated by Ashford, but not assigned a siglum). Although Ashford collated these last two fragments, stating that each contains an 'expanded version' of the *Assomption* (p. xi), he ultimately rejected them as too heavily interpolated; Le Saux refers to them 'Wace-based' (p. 34) and Boulton associates them with Wace ('Manuscript Tradition', pp. 63–65). Blacker's preliminary research on manuscripts containing Old French verse Assumption narratives suggests that while Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1137 (51) and Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 593 may have drawn on the *CND*, neither contains enough lines from Wace to be considered a Wace manuscript.

[5] The variants from Ashford's edition are not reprinted below. Partial editions have also been published by Paul Meyer (1879, 1887, 1890, 1908), August Pantel (1909), Severio Panunzio (1967, 1973) and Keller (1975). Although not an edition, Wace's *Assomption* from Mancel and Trébutien's edition is reprinted in full in Dom Hesbert and Dom Bertraud, *L'Assomption de Notre-Dame*, pp. 156–71. See also J. Blacker and Glyn S. Burgess, *Wace: A Critical Bibliography*, pp. 14–16.

[6] See the Introductions to the *Margaret* and the *Nicholas* for discussions of the order of composition of Wace's hagiographical poems.

cult of the Virgin both in England and Normandy.[7] In addition, Wace's use of the *Établissement* section as a preface raises the remaining sections to a level beyond that of commemoration or of edifying entertainment, i.e. to that of polemic: the *Établissement* argues for the observation of the feast and may well have been commissioned not only to bolster grass-roots support but also to spearhead a more broadly based movement to celebrate the Virgin in this way. As Françoise Le Saux has observed, this little-known text is a 'remarkable piece of work . . . effective propaganda, based on solid and painstaking scholarship . . . the theological implications of which would have been controversial for many' in Wace's audience (*Companion*, pp. 50, 38).

It has been suggested that Wace may not be the author of the entire *CND*, though the authorship of the first three parts is less open to dispute than that of the last two.[8] His name is mentioned in the third person at the beginning of the *Établissement* (v. 2) and again at the beginning of the transition section (v. 1111).[9] In addition, details of the near-shipwreck in the *Établissement*, particularly the anguished despair of the sailors, are also very similar to descriptions of storms at sea and other maritime passages, particularly in the *Brut* but also the *Rou*, revealing the use of technical nautical terms and an interest in drama at sea that have come to be considered hallmarks of this author.[10] The *Conception* section is characterised by techniques later found in abundance in Wace's chronicles, including the frequent use of direct address, especially at high points in the narrative, such as the angel's speeches to Joachim and Anna announc-

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[7] For a detailed account of Wace's sources, see Rita Beyers, 'La *Conception Nostre Dame* de Wace'. Henceforth, unless otherwise noted, all references to Beyers are to this article, not to her edition of the *De Nativitate Mariae* (vol. 10 of *Libri de Nativitate Mariae: Libellus de natiuitate sanctae Mariae*).

[8] Meyer, 'Légendes hagiographiques', pp. 363–67, and Ashford, ed., pp. xii–xvi.

[9] Ashford refers to the transition section as a 'transition poem' (ed., p. vii etc.), a term that has been used by scholars in the majority of cases to refer to this section. However, since the section stands alone (or nearly) in only one manuscript (MS W, BNF, lat. 5002 contains the transition section and the first twenty-one lines of the *Trois Maries*, vv. 1111–55) and does not appear to have been conceived as an independent narrative, we have chosen the expression 'transition section'.

[10] For example in the *Brut* (ed. Ivor D. O. Arnold) the description of Arthur's preparations to cross the Channel (vv. 11190–238), the shipwreck of the 11,000 virgins (vv. 6035–76), Brennius's and Guthlac's sea battle (vv. 2459–92), and in the *Rou* (ed. Anthony J. Holden) William Rufus's crossing from Southampton to Normandy (vv. 9847–58). See William Sayers, 'Old Norse Nautical Terminology', 'Some International Nautical Etymologies' and 'A Norse Etymology for Luff', and also Joël H. Grisward, 'A propos du thème descriptif de la tempête', Beyers (p. 368 and n. 28), Brian Woledge, 'Notes on Wace's Vocabulary', and Keller, *Étude descriptive*, pp. 221–26. See also the note to v. 160.

ing the future birth of Mary (vv. 329–86 and 505–47), and repetitions with variations such as the comparisons and contrasts between Jesus and John the Baptist, each of whom was in the womb at the same time:

> Fiz porterent, mais molt divers,
> Li uns ert sire, l'altre sers;
> Li uns faitre, l'altre faiture;
> L'uns criëere, l'uns creature;
> Li uns ert pere, l'altre fiz;
> E li uns granz, l'altre petiz. (vv. 895–900)

While for modern readers, the history of the three Marys may not seem to be a logical sequel to the Conception, Annunciation and Passion stories, in light of Wace's interest in genealogy, as seen in the *Brut* and the *Rou*, the material on Mary's family appears less gratuitous and less of a distraction to the promised section on the Assumption.[11] In addition, the poet wants to continue to provide justification and help to erase doubts, another of Wace's characteristic tropes:

> Mais premierement vueil conter
> Un petit de sun parenté
> Dunt mainte gent avrunt doté. (vv. 1132–34)

The narrative of John the Evangelist's birth and his relationship with his aunt, the Virgin Mary (vv. 1231–58), also provides Wace with an excellent opportunity to comment on the importance of virginity. Although the concepts are not original, the amount of repetition, both lyrical and semantic, and of over-explanation in the presentation are highly suggestive of Wace's authorship.[12]

The *Assomption* section has given the greatest cause for questioning his authorship, though at present it is largely accepted that this particular version is by Wace.[13] There are, however, seventeen known manuscripts of at least two (or possibly three) anonymous versions of the Assumption narrative and further work is needed to determine the relationship between

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[11] On Wace's attention to detail concerning families and descent in the *Rou*, see Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts, 'Wace as Historian', Matthew Bennett, 'The Uses and Abuses of Wace's *Roman de Rou*', and Philip E. Bennett, 'Epopée, historiographie, généalogie'. On Wace's preoccupation with lineage in the *Brut*, see Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians*, pp. 193–95, and Emmanuèle Baumgartner, 'Le *Brut* de Wace: préhistoire arthurienne'.

[12] See the discussion of repetition in the *Margaret* below (p. 177 ff.).

[13] Meyer, 'Notice du ms. de l'Arsenal', p. 54, and Ashford, ed., p. xv.

the anonymous versions and that of Wace.[14] Like the other sections, the *Assomption* has a justificatory function. As often seen in the *Brut* and the *Rou*, the poet refuses to confirm what cannot be corroborated. With reference to proof of the nature of the disappearance of the Virgin's body after it was placed in the tomb, he equivocates, as he often does in the chronicles:

> Ne puis dire ne afermer,
> Ne je nel vueil ci aconter,
> Que hom ne feme qui vesquist
> Puis cele hore le cors veïst. (vv. 1721–24)

However, unlike in the *Brut*, for example, where he refuses to include the book of Merlin's Prophecies because, he says, he cannot understand them and does not want to misspeak by providing an erroneous interpretation (*Brut*, vv. 7535–42),[15] in the *CND* Wace tells what he believes:

> Se l'om demande que je crei
> Del cors, s'il est en ciel par sei
> E l'arme par sei ensement,
> De ce respondrai je briément:
> Ce crei qu'ele est resuscitee
> E vive e mielz qu'ele n'iert nee. (vv. 1741–46)

Furthermore, since Mary's flesh was devoid of lust and she was the vessel of the creation of Jesus, her remains should not rot or perish through rottenness: 'Ne deit mie la char porrir / Ne par porreture perir / Dunt la char Damnedé fu faite / E nee e conceüe e traite' (vv. 1749–52). The *Assomption* section ends with narratives of both the Resurrection and of Jonah and the whale as forms of proof of the Assumption, the best that could be provided by the poet's faith. In fact, it would appear that the rhetoric and content of the *Assomption* section fall more closely in line with Christian apologetics than does the *Établissement*, which was to a greater extent intended to justify and promote observance and liturgical

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[14] To the thirteen anonymous Old French verse Assumption manuscripts listed by Pantel (ed., pp. 5–9), including the one he edits and tentatively attributes to Gautier de Coinci (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3517), should be added the following: Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, L. II. 14, St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F. v. XIV 9, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Pal. 106, and Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, 657 (139). See also Boulton, 'Manuscript Tradition', pp. 63–64, A. Boselli, 'Una nuova redazione del *Trespassement Nostre Dame*', pp. 301–03 and William Musil, ed., *Roman de saint Fanuel*, pp. 50–52. See also n. 52, pp. 41–42 below.

[15] See Blacker, ' "Ne vuil sun livre translater" '.

practice. Nonetheless, given the range of Wace's corpus, it is not impossible that he was capable of producing Christian apologetics.

The poem has no named patron in any of the sections. It could have been addressed to French-speaking English ecclesiastics or to laypeople, in order to encourage further observance of the feast of the Conception and veneration of the Virgin in general, or to a Norman audience, including Henry I, king of England, who was already a supporter of the feast, or Stephen (his successor to the throne, 1135–54), whose position on this issue is unclear.[16] Le Saux has suggested Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, nephew of King Henry, brother of King Stephen and patron of William of Malmesbury, as a possible patron, in light of his connections and the prominence of Winchester as a centre of Marian devotion in England (*Companion*, p. 50 n. 56). With respect to the possibility of Norman patrons, none has thus far been suggested by name, although claims have been made for the eleventh-century observance of the feast in Normandy on behalf of a number of monasteries and churches, including Coutances, Sainte-Trinité in Caen and Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives (Jean Fournée, 'L'Abbaye de Fécamp', p. 163). Plausible indicators place the earliest Norman observance around the mid-twelfth century, most likely at Fécamp and Rouen, and the last third of the century in Bayeux and Avranches.[17]

It would also appear that the first mention of the well-known designation of the feast of the Conception as the 'fête aux Normands' does not predate the first half of the thirteenth century. Its first recorded use may have been in 1266, when the prelate Eudes Rigaud of Saint-Séverin in Paris celebrated the mass on December 8 for the students of the 'Nation Normande', the Norman students having placed themselves under the patronage of the Virgin. Hence the feast of the Conception took the name 'fête aux Normands: *festum nationis normannicae*' (Vacandard, 'Les Origines de la fête', pp. 173–74). Thus, the presumed association of Wace's

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[16] On Henry I, see Gioia Paradisi, *Le passioni dell storia*, p. 50, and Antonia Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary', p. 648. Another possible audience is suggested by Boulton, that of cloistered nuns, i.e. 'sisters of the patrons of medieval romances' ('The Lives of the Virgin by Wace and Herman de Valenciennes', p. 122).

[17] Although documents do not permit precise dating in the twelfth century for the earliest celebrations of the feast in either Fécamp or Rouen, Fournée cites charter evidence for Bayeux (not before 1165), and for Avranches he invokes the authority of a sermon by Achard, bishop of Avranches (between 1161 and 1171) ('L'Abbaye de Fécamp', pp. 163–64). See also E. Vacandard ('Les Origines de la fête') and Le Saux, who suggests 'early twelfth century' for Fécamp (*Companion*, pp. 31–32).

poem with the 'fête aux Normands' may be premature in that, rather than already being widespread, the feast may have been barely under way in Normandy when Wace was writing. So it is not impossible that in the exhortation to observe the feast, 'Dunt nos devun la feste faire' (v. 178), the 'nos' refers to the Normans: we should all celebrate the feast (not just the English).

Despite the lack of indications of patronage for any of the sections, the existence of stylistic similarities between the sections and Wace's other works, stylistic similarities amongst the sections themselves and a comprehensive thematic unity all suggest that Ashford was fundamentally correct in thinking that Wace wrote each of the sections: the *Établissement* in honour of the feast of the Conception, and the last two in honour of the feast of the Assumption (p. xv) (though why he did not mention the *Conception* section as well as the *Établissement* as written in support of establishing the feast, or establishing it more broadly, remains unclear);[18] although the polemical element in favour of the latter feast is not as central in the *Assomption* as it is in the *Établissement*, the suggestion is nonetheless plausible.[19] Keller agreed with Ashford, positing furthermore that Wace wrote the two pairs of texts as two units—the *Établissement* and *Conception*, and the *Trois Maries* and *Assomption*—and later joined them with the transition section to create a structural unity in addition to the thematic ('Quelques réflexions sur la poésie hagiographique', pp. 97–99).

Outline of the Narrative

(i) *Établissement* (vv. 1–178). This section opens with a reference to Master Wace, who will recount how the feast of the Conception of the Virgin was first established and celebrated. When the king of the Danes hears of his friend Harold's defeat and death, he has a fleet prepared to do battle with William and the Normans, who have taken the land

[18] Ashford points out a certain number of morphological and phonological features that run throughout the entire poem (pp. xv, xxv–xxxiv).

[19] Although the Assumption was not an official dogma of the Church until 1950, at the time Wace was writing the feast of the Assumption was less in need of 'promotion' than the Conception, since it was more widely practised, having been a feast of obligation since at least the ninth century (cited in 813 AD, Council of Mayence). On the observance of Marian feasts in England, see Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (chapter 2, 'Feast of the Virgin: Origin and Development', pp. 25–51); on the liturgy for the feasts of the Nativity and Assumption in particular, see Margot Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres, and the *Stirps Jesse*'.

wrongfully. On hearing of this plan, King William has his castles and cities strengthened and with advice from his barons sets about sending men to Denmark to discover whether peace is in any way possible. The king summons Helsin, abbot of Ramsey, to lead the expedition, equipping him well and giving him presents of gold and silver for the Danes. On crossing the sea and reaching Denmark, Helsin gives the king and his barons many gifts and succeeds in his mission of peace. The Danish king also gives Helsin gifts and the abbot sets sail with his crew. When they are no longer able to see Denmark behind them or England ahead of them, a great storm arises and the men despair of reaching home alive. So Helsin prays to the Virgin and soon an angel appears to them. The angel, who calls out to him by name, makes Helsin promise that for the rest of his life he will ensure that the feast of the Conception of the Virgin is celebrated. Helsin says he does not know the date and circumstances of the feast and forthwith the angel explains the details to him, recommending that the service of the Nativity be used, with the word 'nativity' replaced by 'conception'. Abbot Helsin thanks God and gives his word. The angel departs and the sea grows calm. Helsin then establishes the feast at Ramsey Abbey and the narrator comments that it is also celebrated in many places and his audience should celebrate it as well.

(ii) *Conception* (vv. 179–1110). This section opens with a short justificatory passage, stating that the feast should be celebrated; to that end, the story of the Conception, birth and life of the Virgin should be told. For twenty years Joachim of Nazareth and Anna of Sepphoris have lived a very virtuous life, but at the time the narrative opens they are in great despair since they are unable to conceive a child. They pray to God, saying that if they were to have a child they would place him or her in God's service. When Joachim attends the festival of the Dedication of the Temple of Solomon, he is turned away, being told that he is not worthy to make an offering to God because the law says that he who does not beget will be cursed (a barren man cannot make an offering at the temple). Too ashamed to return home, Joachim goes out into the desert with his shepherds and weeps. An angel appears to Joachim and tells him that, in God's plan, a couple who bears a child in their old age will be blessed. The angel tells Joachim about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rachel, Samuel and Samson, and then about the daughter whom Joachim will conceive with Anna. Joachim gives thanks to God and makes sacrifices, following instructions from the

Holy Ghost. The narrator explains the nature and symbolism of the various sacrifices before turning to Anna's sorrow. Anna's chambermaid Uten attempts to cheer her by trying to convince her to dress appropriately, leave her room and attend the festival in the temple. Anna reproves Uten and receives the same sort of reply in kind. Anna laments and prays.

The same angel who spoke to Joachim appears before Anna to relate the story of Rachel and then announce Mary's conception, her birth, the future dedication at the temple and the virgin birth of Jesus. Two men clad in white garments announce Joachim's return home. Anna goes to the golden gates in Jerusalem to meet Joachim and soon after returning home they conceive a child. When Mary is three years old, she goes to the temple with her parents and climbs up the fifteen steps by herself. As promised, after making sacrifices, Joachim and Anna leave Mary in the temple to be raised with the other virgins. A commentary on Mary's holiness follows. At the age of fourteen it is decided that a husband will be chosen for her, but she is not eager to comply, preferring to remain a virgin in God's service, according to her vow. A council of wise men and elders is convened by the high priest in order to decide the matter. A voice is heard telling them that the Holy Ghost would repose within the rod that will issue forth from the root of Jesse. The high priest summons all those from the line of David who have no wives. Although not seeking to marry, Joseph comes from Jerusalem as requested. He is admonished for having concealed his rod, and when he brings it forth it sprouts and flowers and a dove descends from heaven and lights upon it. Having received this sign, Joseph cannot refuse to marry the virgin. Accompanied by her people and seven virgins, Mary goes with Joseph to Nazareth in Galilee. A narrative of St Gabriel's Annunciation to the Virgin follows, as well as an account of how Mary's cousin Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, conceived John the Baptist. A bond develops between the women. Mary returns home to be greeted by Joseph's consternation at her pregnancy. One night an angel appears to Joseph in order to dissuade him from fleeing or thinking ill of Mary. From that point onwards, Joseph is not afraid and he lives with the Virgin chastely and serves her. Joseph takes Mary to Bethlehem. The narrator explains the Virgin Birth and praises Mary in her role as intercessor for mankind.

(iii) Transition section (vv. 1111–34). These lines name Wace as the author and sum up in broad outline the contents of the *Conception* section, what is to come in the *Assomption* and what is contained in the *Trois Maries*.

(iv) *Histoire des Trois Maries* (vv. 1135–292). The opening part of this section contains a genealogy rather than a narrative of events. Anna had a sister named Esmeria, the mother of Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah and mother of John the Baptist. Anna, the elder sister, was married three times. She had three daughters known as the three Marys, each born from a different husband: Joachim was the father of the Virgin Mary; after his death, Anna married Cleophas; and after Cleophas passed away she married Salome. The second Mary married Alphaeus and gave birth to Joseph and James (St James the Less), the apostle who was called Jesus's brother 'through his family, / And through his worth and his goodness' (vv. 1163–64). James's saintliness and death are recounted. The third Mary was born to Anna and Salome; she was given in marriage to Zebedee from Galilee and gave birth to two sons, James (St James the Greater), who was beheaded by Herod, and St John the Evangelist. John's holiness and virginity are the subject of the lengthy concluding passage in this section.

(v) *Assomption* (vv. 1293–810). One year after the Passion, while the Virgin laments the death of her son and prays to be taken to heaven, an angel appears and gives her an olive branch, saying that in three days time she will depart from this earth. She leaves her chamber dressed in her finest clothes and climbs the Mount of Olives, where she repeats her prayer that she should be taken to heaven to be with Jesus in life everlasting. She returns home, gathers her family around her and bids them make vigil until her end arrives. As she speaks, away in Ephesus, St John, whose task it was to care for her, is seized by a cloud and carried to Mount Zion, to the home of the Virgin. Mary gives John her burial garment with instructions to carry the branch before her bier at the ceremony, being careful not to let the Jews burn her body after death. John replies that he cannot do her bidding without help, and while he is telling her this the apostles appear on a cloud that had gathered them from various places. St John greets the apostles, among whose number, the narrator explains, is Matthew, who was chosen to replace Judas after the latter's treachery. St John

explains how they all arrived at the Virgin's home and states that they are to keep vigil for three days. While the others sleep, the apostles, St John and three virgins remain awake and witness the arrival of Jesus accompanied by a great light and many angels. When Jesus speaks to Mary, praising her, she falls to the ground and prays. When her prayer is done, she returns to bed; her soul leaves her body and is confided to St Michael and St Gabriel by Jesus.

The narrator relates that it is believed that the Assumption took place on Mount Zion and describes the preparation of the body for burial. John gives the branch to St Peter, urging him to take the first place in the procession, but Peter refuses, stating that, as John is a virgin and chosen by Jesus to take care of Mary, he should be first. With John preceding, the apostles, singing the *In exitu*, follow the bier into Jerusalem. When a crowd of Jews catch sight of the bier being carried to the tomb, a master incites them to seize the bier and burn the body. They advance with swords drawn, but they are unable to harm the apostles, as God strikes many of them blind. The master rushes forward and places his hands on the bier, but his hands become dried up and stuck, so that he cannot knock down the bier or steal the olive branch. He calls upon the apostles to free his hands from the bier and restore him to health. St Peter says this is not in their power until the man accepts Jesus as the Saviour. The man replies that he will not fail to say that he believes in the son of the Virgin Mary. The apostles pray and Peter instructs the man to touch the bier and kiss it; he will be healed if he truly believes what he has said about Jesus. The man is cured, and those who choose to believe are cured by touching the olive branch, but the others remain as they are. The apostles take the bier to the tomb in Josaphat, as Jesus had commanded, but since that day the body has never been seen. The narrator comments that, if asked if the body has joined the soul, he would answer that he believes this to be true. The narrative closes with the story of Jonah from the Old Testament, a miracle story of three children preserved in a fire and other resurrections performed by Jesus (as well as his Resurrection). These are offered as proof of the possibility of the Assumption: as Jonah was saved from the sea, the children saved from burning and others resurrected, Mary was taken to heaven alive.

Structure

(i) *Établissement*

1–13	Introduction: it is Master Wace who relates that the feast of the Conception was never celebrated before the time of King William
14–38	The king of the Danes hears of the death of his friend, King Harold, and prepares ships and arms to do battle with the Normans
39–64	Abbot Helsin of Ramsey is summoned to sail on a mission of peace to the Danes, bearing gifts; well received, he accomplishes his mission
65–94	Helsin's ship encounters a great storm; the soldiers are afraid and pray
95–126	An angel appears to Helsin, explaining that if he is to arrive safely in England he must promise to establish the holy feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary
127–46	Helsin promises and asks the angel about the date and the service
147–66	He returns safely to England and relates the story of the miracle far and wide
167–78	He establishes the feast at Ramsey Abbey; it is celebrated in many places; the narrator states that his audience should also celebrate it

(ii) *Conception*

179–218	The virtuous Joachim of Galilee and Anna of Sepphoris have been married for twenty years but have no children
219–80	During the festival of the Dedication of the Temple, Joachim is shunned when attempting to make an offering and informed by the high priest that his barren marriage has rendered him impure
281–369	Joachim goes into the desert to weep and pray, staying away from home for many days; an angel appears announcing the future birth of Mary
370–420	The angel explains to Joachim that Mary will be filled with the Holy Spirit before birth and that in life she will remain a virgin; from her the Saviour Jesus will be born

421–570 Anna's grief until she is visited by the same angel, who also tells her that God will answer her prayers

571–94 When Mary is three years old, Joachim and Anna take her to the temple as instructed; the child climbs the steps by herself

595–636 They give her to be raised with the virgins in the temple as promised; God has chosen Mary to be the vessel of the Saviour

637–76 Wishing to remain a virgin, Mary refuses to follow the custom of marrying at the age of fourteen

677–734 A voice explains to the high priest and elders the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the root of Jesse being filled with the Holy Spirit, how the Saviour will come from the lineage of David

735–82 The rod Joseph is holding sprouts and a dove descends from heaven to light upon it; following this sign, Mary is given to Joseph; he returns to Bethlehem and she to Nazareth in Galilee

783–879 The Annunciation: as St Gabriel ends his speech, Mary is impregnated and declares that she is the handmaiden of the Lord; the narrator explains the redemptive power of Jesus Christ

880–932 Mary, great with child, goes to her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist and who informs her that what St Gabriel told her (i.e. the prophecy of the birth of Jesus) will come to pass

933–92 Having returned from his own region after four months, Joseph grows angry on realising that Mary is pregnant, but an angel appears to him and reveals the nature of the pregnancy and the future birth of Jesus; he is no longer afraid, and when the time comes he takes Mary to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born

993–1110 The narrator explains the wonder of the virgin birth, the star of the sea, castigates Eve (includes an etymology of 'Eva' as the opposite of 'Ave') and extols Mary as intercessor for mankind

(iii) *Transition Section*

1111–34 Wace is named for the second time, followed by a summary of the *Conception* section, an announcement of the *Assomption* and the *Trois Maries*

(iv) *Histoire des Trois Maries*

1135–92 Mary's family: her mother Anna had three husbands, Joachim, Cleophas and Salome; with each she had a daughter named

Mary (the first Mary became the mother of Jesus, the second the mother of Joseph and the apostle James the Less and the third the mother of apostles James the Greater and St John the Evangelist)

1193–230 The relationship between St John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary

1231–92 Wace's view of virginity: unlike other virtues, once lost, it can never be recovered; John's holiness and designation as Mary's guardian

(v) *Assomption*

1293–334 Mary wishes to be with her son in paradise and is visited by an angel

1335–86 She climbs the Mount of Olives, speaks to the Lord and returns home to prepare her family for her death

1387–480 St John and the apostles are transported to Mary in a cloud to keep vigil

1481–530 Jesus addresses Mary; her reply

1531–616 Mary's death; her body is carried on a bier

1617–714 A crowd of Jews attacks the bier, wanting to burn her body

1715–94 Her body is placed in a tomb; the tomb still survives, but the body has never been seen again

1795–810 Epilogue

As an overview of the structure of the text(s) demonstrates, the *CND* is more unified thematically than structurally. The overall goal of each section is to fill in gaps in the audience's knowledge of Mary, which is accomplished from a variety of historical, liturgical, theological and other perspectives. In addition, the title *Conception Nostre Dame* is somewhat of a misnomer in that the poem—actually a collection or cycle—is much more comprehensive than a narrative of the conception of the Virgin, since it begins with a narrative explaining the origin of the feast of the Conception in England and justifying the liturgical composition and promulgation of the feast abroad. The narrative then proceeds to the background of Joachim and Anna's marriage, leading up to Mary's conception, a genealogy of Anne, Mary and Jesus's siblings (cousins) on his mother's side and, finally, Mary's death and Assumption, with significant emphasis on the role of St John. The 'epilogue' of the *Assomption* section functions only as an epilogue to that narrative and not to the entire poem or cycle. Thus, there is no explicit acknowledgement in the poem of its

greater unity or plan, either at the beginning or at the end, though to a limited extent one might be tempted to consider the transition section as an announcement of a structural plan, seeking to create a greater scheme for the poem than that found in the individual parts.

Sources and Historical Background

Établissement

The feast of the Conception was first celebrated in the East as the feast of St Anne, probably no earlier than the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century. The feast first appeared in the western Church in Anglo-Saxon monasteries in the mid-eleventh century. Suppressed by the Normans in England soon after the Conquest, it underwent a revival in the early twelfth century. Although claims have been made (see pp. 18–19 above), there do not appear to be documents corroborating observance in Normandy as early as the eleventh century; it is possible that the Norman observance paralleled the early twelfth-century English revival.[20] Beginnings of the observance in the rest of France can be seen as early as the late 1130s.[21] It should be noted that at the time Wace was writing, during the growth in its observance, the feast of the Conception of Mary was called simply by that term and was meant to commemorate the angel's appearance to Joachim and Anna and his annunciation of Mary's birth.[22] It was not until much later that the term 'immaculate' was added so that the name of the feast would reflect development in the doctrine. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was debated by theologians throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—perhaps being made more problematic by the fact that no explicit mention of Mary's sinless conception existed in Scripture or in apostolic teaching (Barbara Sella, 'Northern Italian Confraternities', p. 600)—and it was not established as a dogma binding on Catholics until 1854.[23] It was not until 1950 that the Assumption was declared infallibly a dogma of the Roman Catholic faith.

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[20] Fournée, 'L'Abbaye de Fécamp', pp. 163–64; Marielle Lamy, *L'Immaculée Conception*, p. 37.

[21] The earliest may have been at Lyons. See p. 34 below.

[22] As Clayton states, 'there is no suggestion in any pre-Conquest text that Mary was preserved free of original sin; this idea was formulated for the first time by Eadmer in the twelfth century' ('Ælfric and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary', p. 288).

[23] Nancy Mayberry observes that 'few doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church have as long and as turbulent a history as that of the Immaculate Conception', which 'did not

Nevertheless, although Wace does not use the term 'immaculate' and does not enter into the theological debate as to whether Mary was conceived without original sin,[24] his presentation appears to be at least informed by a belief in the Virgin's divinely ordained purity as part of her election before birth: 'De Saint Esprit ert replenie / Anceis que seit de mere nee' (vv. 370–71).[25] He also appears to have leaned towards acceptance of what would eventually become the dogma of the bodily Assumption of the Virgin, through statements of his own beliefs (*Assomption*, vv. 1744–96).

The *Établissement* makes unique use, with polemic intent, of the Helsin miracle, a miracle story gaining in popularity around this time. Wace may have known of other miracle stories concerning the establishment of the feast, for example, two stories found along with the Helsin story in the *Sermo de conceptione Beatae Mariae*, one supposedly from the time of Charlemagne, the other from an unknown period in which, following an amorous tryst, a French canon is saved from death from drowning, after promising to establish the feast of the Conception.[26] But it is significant

win confirmation until 1854, and only after centuries of debate' ('The Controversy of the Immaculate Conception', p. 207).

[24] Amongst theologians, 'although all parties agreed that Mary was immaculate, the controversy was over the precise moment at which she became free from sin . . . at her conception, in the womb, at birth, at the Annunciation, or in the mind of God before her conception' (Mayberry, pp. 208, 211).

[25] Here Wace follows a version of the *De Nativitate* almost verbatim: 'spiritu sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris' (ed. Constantin von Tischendorf, III, p. 115) ('[she] shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from her mother's womb', trans. B. H. Cowper, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, *De Nativitate*, III, p. 88). A distinction, however, needs to be made between a belief in Mary's purity before birth and the Immaculate Conception: it is not inconsistent that Wace asserts Mary's purity as a foundation for her election as Jesus's mother, as found in his main source, the *De Nativitate*, while refraining from explicitly demonstrating or arguing for an exceptional nature for her birth, i.e. that she was born of Anna and Joachim, but without the taint of original sin at the moment of her conception, as first argued by Eadmer, his contemporary, in the *Tractatus de conceptione sanctae Mariae* (ed. Herbert Thurston and Thomas Slater; see also Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 432–36). For another view of Wace and the Immaculate Conception, see Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 42–44, and Beyers, p. 375.

[26] The *Sermo* was erroneously attributed to St Anselm, *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter *PL*), vol. 159, cols 319–24. With reference to dating the Helsin foundation story as found in the *Sermo*, Southern states that 'the version of the story in the *Sermo de conceptione beatae Mariae* . . . cannot be traced earlier than the end of the twelfth century and derives from William of Malmesbury's account' ('The English Origins', p. 195 n. 1). An English translation based on Jacques-Paul Migne's text of the *Sermo* (*PL*, 159, cols 319–24) can be found in Edward O'Connor, *The Dogma*, pp. 522–24. O'Connor notes that the canon from the non-Helsin miracle story was called 'the Canon of Rouen' in other texts and that 'another account of the Helsin legend, closely parallel to the present one' was edited by Thurston and Slater (as Appendix E) in *Eadmeri monachi Cantuariensis tractatus*, pp. 88–92; see also Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 34. For the Latin version of the Helsin miracle cited by Southern

that Wace chose what was to become the more widespread Helsin foundation version, making noteworthy changes to it (see below, pp. 31–32). In broad outline, in Wace's version Helsin, abbot of Ramsey, is sent by William the Conqueror as an ambassador to the Danes soon after the Conquest.[27] On the return trip Helsin and his party have nearly drowned in a storm when an angel appears to him, stating that he will be saved if he returns to his monastery of Ramsey with the promise to establish for posterity the feast of the Conception. The angel then explains the nature of the mass for the new feast: they should use the service for the feast of the Nativity, but where the word 'nativity' appears they should substitute 'conception'.[28]

By around 1140 the Helsin miracle story existed in collections of Miracles of the Virgin by known authors and also in anonymous versions: collections have been attributed to Dominic, prior of Evesham, Anselm the Younger, the nephew of St Anselm and abbot of Bury St Edmunds (1121–48), who is credited with re-establishing the feast in England early in his abbacy and William of Malmesbury (whose *Gesta regum Anglorum* and *Historia novella* Wace used in writing the *Roman de Rou*).[29] Given the number of manuscript variations in the Miracle collections, which creates, as Richard W. Southern has called it, 'a picture of such bewildering confusion of detail', it is impossible to attribute with certainty all the

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('The English Origins', p. 195 and n. 1) and Clayton ('Feasts of the Virgin', p. 230; repr. in *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 47–48), see Elise F. Dexter's edition of the miracle collection in University of Chicago MS Phillipps 25142, *Miracula sanctae virginis Mariae*, pp. 37–38; this Helsin version was also translated by Clayton ('Feasts of the Virgin', pp. 230–31 n. 90; repr. in *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 48–49 n. 87). The collection edited by Dexter may well date from the first half of the twelfth century (Dexter, p. 9), and be attributable at least in part to Anselm the Younger (Southern, 'The English Origins', p. 195 n.1, and David R. Howlett, *The English Origins of Old French Literature*, pp. 80–81 and nn. 121–22, p. 172).

[27] Helsin has been identified as the abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury, 1060–70 and later abbot of Ramsey ca. 1080–87 (or 1088). There is evidence that the mission took place, but the dating is obscure; see Southern, 'The English Origins', pp. 195–97, id., *Saint Anselm*, p. 434, and the note to v. 42 below.

[28] Clayton notes that the 'use of the mass for the Nativity would remove the apocryphal bias'. Use of this already established 'hallowed text, of unquestioned orthodoxy' for the feast of the Conception would imply that the 'object of the feast was doctrinally no different from that of the feast of the Nativity', thereby countering objections to the celebration ('Feasts of the Virgin', p. 231).

[29] On Wace's sources for the Helsin narrative in the *CND*, see Beyers, pp. 364–68, and for the *Rou*, see Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, pp. 32, 183–84. On these Latin miracle collections, including the attribution to Anselm the Younger (p. 199), see Southern, 'The English Origins' and also J. C. Jennings, 'The Writings of Prior Dominic of Evesham', and Peter Carter, 'The Historical Content of William of Malmesbury's Miracles of the Virgin Mary'; on the earliest French miracles (post Wace), see Howlett, *The English Origins*, pp. 95–102.

various details to particular texts, but certain discrepancies are notable ('The English Origins', p. 176). First, in at least two versions of William of Malmesbury's miracle text, Helsin's mission does not occur immediately after the Norman invasion, as in Wace, but ten years later during the reign of the Danish King Canute (1076–86), when the threat of a Danish invasion was imminent (Beyers, p. 363 and n. 17). While William of Malmesbury's version may be more accurate in terms of chronology, Wace paints a more positive picture by stating that King William sends Helsin on a mission of peace as soon as the Danish king had heard that King Harold had been killed and that Helsin bears gifts for all. William of Malmesbury, among others, states that it was a mission of information, to learn whether the Danish king would attack, and in one of the Malmesbury versions there is no mention of gifts.[30] In Wace's version William is afraid, but he is also a peacemaker. Versions other than William of Malmesbury's state that Helsin had been abbot of Canterbury, but that he was then appointed to the abbacy of Ramsey (Beyers, pp. 367–68).

Like William of Malmesbury, Wace makes no allusion to Helsin's former post in Canterbury, mentioning only the connection with Ramsey (Southern, 'The English Origins', p. 195). Rita Beyers speculates that Wace may have considered that piece of information to be of no interest to his Norman audience (p. 367 n. 27). More plausible, however, is that for this piece of information Wace followed William of Malmesbury's tidied-up version or an anonymous version lacking the reference to Canterbury and that he was therefore perhaps unaware of Helsin's former connection with Canterbury (Southern, 'The English Origins', p. 185). It seems difficult to believe that Wace would have omitted Helsin's association with Canterbury if he had known about it, especially on account of Canterbury's prominence and its prior association with the feast. The feasts of the Presentation and Conception were first introduced into England in Winchester around 1030 and they then spread to Canterbury and Exeter (Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 50). Perhaps Wace omitted mention of Canterbury due to the long-standing, and on-going, disputes between the archbishops and the kings over investiture (Charles Warren Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 149–53). Also, it was in his role as archbishop of Canterbury that William the Conqueror's appointee, Lanfranc, had begun to abolish observance of the feast soon after 1070 in his effort to abolish many of the feasts peculiar to Anglo-Saxon England (Clayton,

[30] Beyers, p. 363 n. 17, and Southern, 'The English Origins', pp. 195–98, and 195 n. 2.

The Cult of the Virgin Mary, p. 50). The feast was not re-established in Canterbury until 1328 (Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 436).

As Le Saux points out, a principal aspect of Wace's version—that it was during William the Conqueror's reign that the feast of the Conception took root in England and not earlier—flies in the face of historical fact, for it was during William's reign that the feast was suppressed, not encouraged, even if William had not given a direct order (*Companion*, p. 36). While other versions of this story begin with King William and have Helsin asking the angel about the nature of the service that underscores the newness of the feast, Wace's version is the only one that states explicitly that the feast had never been celebrated before the Norman Conquest. Perhaps Wace was trying to be more precise than his sources, but it is more likely that, good Norman that he was, he was determined to have the feast associated with Norman rule.[31] This stance would probably have been seen favourably by the court and entourage of King Henry I (1100–35), given that Henry was the highest-ranking secular supporter of the feast (and the fourth son of William the Conqueror), having ordered it to be celebrated at his new foundation in Reading. According to a late-twelfth-century chronicler, in 1129 the Council of London 'in the presence of King Henry confirmed the feast of the Conception of St Mary, Mother of God, with apostolic authority' (Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary', p. 648).

In England two of the most influential ecclesiastical supporters of the feast were Anselm the Younger of Bury St Edmunds and Eadmer of Canterbury, historian and also St Anselm's secretary until the latter's death in 1109. Wace later used Eadmer's *Historia novorum in Anglia* as a source for his *Roman de Rou*.[32] Although Eadmer may have exaggerated the extent of the observance of the feast of the Conception, the opening lines of the *Tractatus de conceptione sanctae Mariae*, the first extant treatise in support of the feast and which, in Barbara Sella's words, 'is also remarkable because it contains the earliest explicit reference to Mary's sinless conception' ('Northern Italian Confraternities', p. 601), make his feelings clear. Eadmer reports that he looked back:

> To those former times when the feast of the Conception of St Mary, the Mother of God, was more widely celebrated, particularly by those in whom a pure simplicity and humble devotion to God was strong. But afterwards,

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[31] On the connections between William the Conqueror and Marian devotion, see also Denis Hüe, 'Guillaume le Conquérant et la Vierge'.

[32] See Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, pp. 32, 103, 183.

> greater knowledge and a more searching examination had puffed up the minds of some, so that the simplicity of the poor was despised, and the celebration of the feast was done away with and utterly destroyed as lacking all reason.[33]

Even though Eadmer does not name Lanfranc, whose disdain for Anglo-Saxon religious practices was well known and who also probably found the theological justifications for the observance lacking, it is difficult not to think of him when reading these lines (Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 433).

However, in addition to Lanfranc, who was of an earlier generation, there were also contemporary opponents of the feast in the 1120s and later. In a letter to Anselm the Younger, Osbert of Clare, prior of Westminster, reports that when he tried to conduct an observance of the feast there in 1127 or 1128:

> Some followers of Satan, whilst we were keeping this feast, decried its observance as hitherto unheard-of [*inauditum*] and absurd [*ridiculum*], and with malicious intent they went to two bishops, Roger (of Salisbury) and Bernard (of St David's), who happened then to be in the neighbourhood, and representing its novelty, they excited them to displeasure.[34]

Osbert relates that Roger and Bernard tried to stop the feast from being celebrated at Westminster on the grounds that it had been 'prohibited as a novelty by an (unspecified) council' (Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary', p. 648). Osbert asked Anselm to work together with Gilbert the Universal, bishop of London (1128–34), and Hugh of Amiens, abbot of Reading (1123–30), in order to counter this opposition and secure unobstructed observance of the feast (Gransden, *ibid.*). As mentioned above, Anselm and his colleagues were successful, as seen in the decision of the Council of London in 1129.

As Marielle Lamy points out, there were multiple objections to the feast: on the historical level, it was new; on the political level, it had not been approved by Rome; on the liturgical level, the service was virtually a double of the feast of the Nativity service; on the theological level, the beliefs behind the observance placed in question the dogma of original sin.[35]

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[33] Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 433 (Southern's translation). On Osbert's role in the movement to reinstate the feast of the Conception, see also A. W. Burridge, 'L'Immaculée Conception', esp. pp. 570–81.

[34] Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, p. 243 (Bishop's translation); for the Latin original, see p. 244 n. 1.

[35] Lamy, *L'Immaculée Conception*, p. 42, though the labelling of the levels here differs from Lamy's.

In addition, on a practical level, both the arguments and tenor of Eadmer's treatise in favour of making universal the feast of the Conception imply a perception that there had not been sufficient justification articulated in support of the feast, a lack that Eadmer intended to address in theological terms, and that Wace addressed, though less precisely, more in terms of tradition and faith.[36]

It is unlikely, however, that any amount of prior justification would have satisfied St Bernard of Clairvaux. In either 1139 or 1140, following the observance of the feast by the canons of Lyons, quite possibly at the urging of Anselm the Younger, he wrote castigating them.[37] Bernard refuted one after another the arguments that could have supported the observance. In brief, he held that it seemed absurd to honour the Conception on the pretext that without it there would be nothing else to celebrate; also, if one were to trace back all causalities, one would have to celebrate the parents, the grand-parents, the great-grand-parents and so on. In addition, St Bernard held that Mary was sanctified upon her birth and that the sanctity associated with her was based on her birth and not on the moment of her conception. Most importantly, since Mary was born from a union between a man and a woman, like all other human beings with the exception of Jesus, she was conceived in sin, and thus to celebrate the conception would be to celebrate a sinful act (Lamy, pp. 43–45). In light of St Bernard's stature and the importance of his arguments, it appears all the more courageous of Wace to have presented his text the way he did, i.e. not just to have produced a narrative on the conception, birth and Assumption of the Virgin, but in addition to have argued for the observance of the new feast (that is, of course, unless Wace had completed the *Conception* before Bernard set down his arguments in writing).

Conception

Wace's primary source for the *Conception* section was the *De Nativitate Mariae* (hereafter *De Nativitate*),[38] itself part of a long tradition of apocry-

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[36] On the singularity of Eadmer's enterprise, Southern comments: 'Most of Eadmer's devotional works had only a local significance, but in writing about the Immaculate Conception, he was engaged on a more momentous adventure than he knew. He thought he was defending a local devotion; he was actually at the beginning of an international event' (*Saint Anselm*, p. 434).

[37] Letter 174 to the canons of Lyons, *PL*, vol. 182, cols 332–36.

[38] Tischendorf's edition (*Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. 113–21) is often cited, but it has recently been largely supplanted by Beyers's 1997 edition. As Beyers notes, the date of the *De Nativitate* is difficult to determine with certainty, but it would appear to have circulated

phal gospel material on the birth and childhood of Mary, beginning with the Greek *Protevangelium of James* (second century AD), which passed into the West in Latin versions. Among the best known of these is the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (ca. 550–750), on which the *De Nativitate* was based.[39] Beyers questions whether Wace was the first to connect the material in the *Établissement* with that of the *Conception*, noting that of the ten twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts of the *De Nativitate* containing a version of the Helsin miracle three have the Mir. 405 version (an anonymous version very similar to Wace's), but not in close proximity to it (p. 368). There is, however, a natural connection or segue between the texts in the mention of the Conception service at the end of the Helsin narrative, a detail not unique to Wace.

Although it is not possible to say with certainty which of the two versions of the *De Nativitate* (A or B) was used by Wace, since the *Conception* does not refer to the prologue of the Latin text and it is the versions of the prologue of the *De Nativitate* that tend to distinguish the versions and their witnesses, Beyers suggests that Wace relied on a model belonging to the subgroup A1, containing twenty-four manuscripts largely of French and Italian provenance and dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries (pp. 376–77 and nn. 44 and 47).

Transition Section

As noted above, Keller suggests, as did Ashford, that Wace quite possibly used the 'transition section' to connect two bipartite texts he had written earlier for separate occasions: the *Établissement* and the *Conception*, written to commemorate the establishment of the feast of the Conception, and the *Histoire des Trois Maries* and *Assomption*, commemorating the feast of the Assumption (see p. 20 above). In terms of manuscript

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from the beginning of the eleventh century, first in Northern France and Lotharingia, and in Wace's time in England and Normandy ('La *Conception Nostre Dame* de Wace', p. 369).

[39] Beyers (p. 369 and n. 35) proposes that, in addition to the *De Nativitate*, Wace used a Latin version of the Greek *Protevangelium Jacobi* (*Protevangelium of James*), though not necessarily the *Pseudo-Mattaei Evangelium* (*Pseudo-Matthew*) (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, ed. Tischendorf, in *Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. 1–50 [Greek]; *Pseudo-Matthew*, ed. Jan Gijsel and ed. Tischendorf, pp. 51–111). According to Clayton (*The Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 16), the *Protevangelium* was translated into Latin in the fifth or sixth century; a complete Latin text has not survived. She points out that 'more important than any of these versions [of the *Protevangelium*] was a new text'—the Latin *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*—which was 'created by reworking the *Protevangelium* and combining it with other sources' (p. 18). For a succinct summary of the contents of the *Protevangelium* in its Greek and Latin traditions, see Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 8–18, and for the *Pseudo-Matthew* pp. 18–23.

preservation, the transition section is never found completely alone and it serves as a connector in eight of the complete (or nearly complete) manuscripts (P does not contain the transition section). It is also found, wholly or in part, serving as a prologue to the *Trois Maries* and *Assomption* in five fragmentary manuscripts (X, G, E, K and BL, Royal 2 A.IX) and as a prologue to the *Trois Maries* in two (W and BL, Cotton Vitellius A.X).[40]

Histoire des Trois Maries

Although the transition section exists as a superficial link between the second and fourth parts of the *Conception*, the *Histoire des Trois Maries* serves as the semantic connection between Wace's narrative of the conception and that of the Assumption. The *Trois Maries* is not an infancy gospel like the *Conception*, but it functions in much the same way, filling in the gaps in the gospels to explain the lineage of Jesus, John the Evangelist and Mary. One of the purposes of the *Trois Maries* is specifically to explain that John the Evangelist was the younger son of Mary Salome, one of Mary's half-sisters, and Zebedee. The information that John was Mary's nephew adds to the reasons (besides his virginity and exceptional purity) why Jesus chose him to look after Mary during her final days of life and following her death, thereby establishing, as Le Saux states, 'a nexus of connections, both spiritual and genealogical, which gives greater resonance and verisimilitude to the bond between John and Mary' (*Companion*, p. 39). In addition, Jesus's choice of John, his favourite apostle, to care for Mary underscores the fact that she had no other sons, thus emphasising both her purity and Jesus's lack of brothers; if there had been more sons, Jesus would have been in violation of Jewish custom in assigning Mary's care to John (Stephen K. Ray, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 351).

However, the narrative in the *Trois Maries* is additionally important because it is the preeminence of Mary's familial line that makes possible Jesus's designation of John as Mary's keeper. Although the *Protevangelium* includes allusions to the Davidic descent of Mary, Jerome had condemned another of the text's teachings that Jesus's brothers were Joseph's sons by a previous marriage (Jerome argued that they were not siblings but

[40] With reference to MS W, see n. 9 above. BL, Cotton Vitellius A.X contains the last six lines of the transition section, and the first 69 of the *Trois Maries*, vv. 1129–203 (see Dean and Boulton, p. 270); BL, Royal 2 A.IX has the last five lines of the transition section; and E, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1473, has the last two lines of the transition section.

cousins).[41] The apocryphal narrative of the three marriages of Anna (the *trinubium Annae*) goes further to suggest the Davidic descent of Mary which was 'itself of apologetic significance once the Davidic descent of Jesus through Joseph is rendered of no significance after Joseph is presented only as the supposed father of Jesus' (J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 51). Cautiously, Wace does not mention openly Mary's descent from the Davidic line. However, by including the material in the *Trois Maries*, he increases Mary's importance by providing information about Jesus's maternal line, which was equally as venerable as Joseph's.

The apocryphal narrative of the three marriages of Anna, the *trinubium Annae*, is found in a number of versions since the eleventh century, although the earliest reference to the marriages may be in a Bible commentary of Haimo of Auxerre (fl. ca. 840–60).[42] Wace's presentation, which makes up the first part of the *Trois Maries* (vv. 1135–92), is probably based on a version of the *trinubium* known as the *Anna et Emeria sorores fuerunt*,[43] but it diverges on at least two principal points: (i) he suppresses the information that Anna's second husband, Cleophas, was Joseph's brother (according to Hegisippus), since this ancient tradition was in direct contradiction with the preceding narrative, and none too flattering since it would have meant that Cleophas went on to marry his step-daughter to his brother;[44] (ii) he presents James (James the Less), son of Anna's second daughter Mary (Mary Cleophas) in detail. Wace points out that James 'was called' Jesus's brother 'through his family' (vv. 1162–63), although the relationship traced by the poet is that of cousin, since

[41] As J. K. Elliott notes, in addition to its explanation that in the Gospels Jesus's siblings were Joseph's children by a previous marriage (rejected by Jerome), the *Protevangelium of James* also includes reference to the Davidic descent of Mary (*Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 50–51). See Elliott's translation of the Greek version of the *Protevangelium* (*ibid.*, 10:1, p. 61; ed. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, 10:1, p. 20) and also his translation from the Latin *Pseudo-Matthew* (*ibid.*, 13, p. 92) (ed. Jan Gijsel, *Libri de Nativitate Mariae: Pseudo-Mattaei evangelium*, 13:1, p. 411 and ed. Tischendorf, *Pseudo-Matthei evangelium*, 13:1, p. 77).

[42] Beyers, p. 379 and n. 55; see also Baudouin de Gaiffier, 'Le *Trinubium Annae*'. This version of the *trinubium* can also be found in the Q family of manuscripts of the *Pseudo-Matthew*, which possibly date from the eleventh century, though the extant manuscripts do not predate the thirteenth (Beyers, p. 379 n. 57, and Gijsel, *Die unmittelbare Textüberlieferung der sog. Pseudo-Matthäus*, pp. 20–21, and edited by Gijsel in *Libri de Nativitate Mariae: Pseudo-Mattaei evangelium*, p. 93).

[43] Beyers, p. 379; Max Förster, 'Die Legende von Trinubium der hl. Anna', p. 115.

[44] Beyers (p. 380 n 58) points out that these details reflect a tradition whose echoes are first found in Eusebius of Caesarea at the beginning of the third century AD. In the *Historia ecclesiastica* (II, 23, 4–18), which became known and was spread in the West through Rufinus's Latin translation, Eusebius provides a narrative on the death of James according to Hegisippus's testimony.

the latter's mother is Anna's second daughter Mary, not the Virgin Mary. Wace emphasises James's sanctity, saying that he 'lived / In a very saintly fashion from the moment he was born' (vv. 1167–68). By contrast, he distinguishes this James from James the Greater, who was the brother of John the Evangelist (the latter being the two sons of Anna's third daughter Mary).[45] James the Greater, to whom four lines are devoted (rather than twenty-two, as in the case of James the Less), was beheaded by Herod, whereas James the Less 'never ceased praying to God' (v. 1174), so much so in fact that his knees became inflamed (vv. 1175–78).

Following the opening genealogical section, the bulk of this narrative on the three Marys is, however, devoted to John the Evangelist (vv. 1193–292), which is an extension of the *trinubium* possibly original to Wace.[46] Within this second part of the *Trois Maries* on John, the subsection on the virtues of virginity (vv. 1231–58), which logically forms part of the narrative of John's stewardship of Mary in the *Trois Maries*, does not correspond with Wace's known source for the opening of the section; the details he includes while comparing the possibility of regaining other lost virtues, but not virginity, may have been original, though fundamentally they reflect the widespread monastic and ecclesiastical value placed on virginity. In this part, Wace asserts that John was Jesus's most beloved apostle, attributing Jesus's devotion to John's exemplary capacity to retain his

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[45] Beyers, pp. 379–80; Sherry L. Reames, 'Legends of Saint Anne', pp. 250–51.

[46] Although we cannot establish with certainty which version of the *trinubium* Wace used, or which his other sources for the *Trois Maries* may have been, it is clear that the *Trois Maries* expands considerably upon a representative version of the *Anna et Emeria sorores fuerunt*: 'Anna et Emeria sorores fuerunt. De Emeria nata est Elisabeth, mater Iohannis Baptistae. Anna uero tres habuit maritos: Ioachim, Cleopham et Salome. De Ioachim habuit Anna Mariam, matrem Christi. Mortuo Ioachim nupsit Cleophae, de quo habuit filiam nomine Mariam, quae cognominatur Cleophae. Cleophas autem pater dedit Ioseph fratri suo uxorem Mariam matrem Christi, quae filiastra sua erat. Et dedit filiam quam ex Anna habuit Alphaeo uxorem, de qua ortus est Iacobus minor et alter Ioseph, unde dicitur Iacobus Alphaei. Mortuo deinde Cleopha, Anna tertio nupsit marito nomine Salome, qui genuit tertiam filiam similiter uocatam Mariam. Haec nupsit Zebedaeo. Ex hac nati sunt Iacobus maior et Iohannes euangelista' (ed. Gijsel, p. 93). ('Anna and Emeria were sisters. From Emeria was born Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist. In truth, Anna had three husbands: Joachim, Cleophas and Salome. From Joachim Anna had Mary, mother of Christ. Upon the death of Joachim she married Cleophas, from whom she had a daughter by the name of Mary, whose surname was Cleophas [Mary Cleophas]. Moreover, Cleophas the father gave Joseph his brother as a wife Mary mother of Christ, who was his stepdaughter. And he gave the daughter he had with Anna to Alphaeus as a husband, from whom was born James the Less and another Joseph, thus he is called James Alphaeus. Upon the death of Cleophas, Anna married her third husband by the name of Salome, who fathered her third daughter similarly named Mary. This Mary married Zebedee. From her were born James the Greater and John the Evangelist' [our translation].

virginity (vv. 1197–206). In addition, John was the only apostle to remain while the others fled after the Passion; having seen Mary with John at the Cross, Jesus 'entrusted them to each other / For support and care' (vv. 1218–19). With regard to John, Wace states that 'he who was the nephew became the son / And he considered his aunt as his mother' (vv. 1223–24). Although this is a religious and not a secular narrative, one cannot help but hear echoes of the importance of the lord–nephew relationship in feudal texts. In addition to the centrality of John as Mary's nephew, Wace underscores that Jesus had 'cleverly arranged' to entrust a virgin to a virgin (vv. 1229–30). Wace's assertion of Mary's virginity throughout Jesus's life serves to praise Mary as well as to support the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, thus remaining within the growing mainstream of popular beliefs about Mary.

On virginity itself, Wace declares: 'But that person is very fortunate, / Man or woman who is born / With the ability to preserve virginity. / This makes them seem on a par with the angels / To anyone who has lost this goodness' (vv. 1231–35). The sense of loss conveyed in this commentary on the immutable nature of lost virginity stands out: 'It will never be restored, / And it can never be recovered afterwards / By anyone who has lost it once' (vv. 1236–38). The poet stresses the singularity of this loss, which, regardless of good intentions, cannot be reversed.[47] Unlike other virtues, which can be recouped if one changes one's ways: 'Virginity works differently; / Recovery is later impossible' (vv. 1255–56). The poet reiterates Jesus's choice of John as Mary's guardian and notes that while the other apostles had gone out to preach the gospel, John remained with Mary, found lodging for her and stayed with her for one year (except for the time he spent preaching in Ephesus before the events leading up to her death and Assumption, vv. 1389–97). At the end of the *Trois Maries* section, the focus shifts from virginity itself, but remains nonetheless with John and Mary, in preparation for the opening of the *Assomption*. By underscoring how the nephew has become the son—while at the same time avoiding the idea that Jesus had 'natural' brothers—Wace highlights Mary's role as John's spiritual mother, further reinforcing the 'Christ-John-Mary . . . three-way

[47] As Beyers notes (p. 380 n. 60), Wace does not enter into the philosophical discussion of the extent of divine power, as did, for example, Peter Damian (ca. 1007–72), who argued for the possibility of God's ability to restore virginity as part of divine omnipotence (cf. I. M. Resnick, 'Peter Damian on the Restoration of Virginity'). In addition to engaging the question of God's power over the past, Damian was also moved by a desire to maintain 'an intimate connection between God's ability to restore virginity in a corporeal sense and the Church's affirmation of the mystery of the Virgin Birth' (Resnick, p. 129).

family bond which was forged at the foot of the cross' (Annette Volfing, *John the Evangelist*, p. 155).

Wace's inclusion of the *Trois Maries* can be seen on one level to be as controversial as his stand in favour of the feast of the Conception of Mary, although he does not explicitly indicate the conception as miraculous or immaculate, as was just beginning to be argued in ecclesiastical circles, initially and principally by Eadmer. Similar to the idea of an Immaculate Conception of Mary, the *trinubium* 'aroused great controversy' in the twelfth century.[48] In his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, Peter Lombard, an Italian theologian who arrived in Paris in the early 1130s and became magister at the cathedral school of Notre Dame around 1145, explains the text line by line, seeking to elucidate the nature of Jesus's brothers. Ultimately Peter declines to decide definitively, given that it was thought that in Hebrew usage first cousins could be referred to as 'brothers', concluding that 'James, the brother of the Lord, ought to be understood either as one of the sons of Joseph by another wife or as a blood relation of Mary his mother'.[49] Wace further equivocates as well by saying of James (the Less) that 'he was *called* brother' (v. 1163), while describing the relationships as those of 'cousins'. However, it is only based on the material about Mary's family in the *Trois Maries* that Wace is able to refer to John the Evangelist as Mary's 'nephew' and to the Virgin as his 'aunt' (vv. 1223–24).

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[48] Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Introduction, p. 13. In the mid-twelfth century, a controversy developed between the 'Salomites', as their opponents called them—those who took the Salome of Mark 15:40 and 16:1 to be a man, i.e. the third husband of Anna in the *trinubium* and therefore father of Mary Salome and grandfather of James the Greater and St John the Evangelist—and principally, but not exclusively, the advocates of the Immaculate Conception, though the debate soon spread beyond England and the twelfth century (*ibid.*, p. 14; see also M. R. James, 'The Salomites'). It is possible that in the mid-twelfth century, those for whom the Immaculate Conception served in part as an explanation of Jesus's lack of brothers or cousins (Mary was immaculately conceived and had no children other than Jesus and her mother Anna only married once, never giving birth to Mary's 'sisters') condemned the *trinubium* and its proponents because the latter's efforts to explain Jesus's extended family through 'natural' means conflicted with belief in the Immaculate Conception; see also p. 50 below for Fulbert of Chartres's view that 'the purity of the Virgin's parents was incompatible with multiple parenthood'). For Wace, however, the genealogy proposed by the *trinubium* was not in conflict apparently with arguments in favour of, or beliefs in, an Immaculate Conception.

[49] Peter Lombard, commentary on Galatians I:19, *Collectaneorum*, *PL*, vol. 192, cols 101–02 (translation, Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Introduction, p. 14.) Ashley and Sheingorn note that although Peter Lombard's discussion of the *trinubium* was widely read by students of theology since he was a principal gloss on Paul in the Middle Ages, 'it did not receive the unquestioning acceptance of his readers' (p. 14).

The genealogical connections between John and Mary set out in the *Trois Maries* provide not only a foundation for their relationship in the Assumption section, but also reinforce the importance of Anna's family tree, which, while controversial in this early period, later came to be juxtaposed with the patriarchal vision of Jesus's ancestry, as seen in the Tree of Jesse.[50] By including the *Trois Maries*, Wace is also tacitly providing an alternative to the explanation in the *Protevangelium of James* of Jesus's contemporary family (not just ancestry), i.e. that Jesus's brothers were the sons of Joseph by another woman, and granting legitimacy to an explanation of Jesus's family based on the matriarchal line (as is also suggested by the *Protevangelium*; see note 41 above).[51]

Just as Wace was apparently not deterred by potential objections to his offering both a Norman version and an English version of the Conquest of England in the *Rou* (i.e. the circumstances surrounding Edward the Confessor's designation of an heir)—since each version was found in his sources he included them both for his public for their information (III, vv. 5597–604)—he offers to the audience of the *CND* both information and belief in support of an Immaculate Conception and a version of the *trinubium*, taking what could be considered an encyclopedic approach towards educational material on Mary's life and death.

Assomption

Wace's *Assomption* is one of possibly five vernacular verse versions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries including two (or possibly three) anonymous versions extant in seventeen known manuscripts; whether any of those anonymous versions predate Wace's version remains at present unclear.[52] Counted among the possibly five versions are also an

[50] With reference to the genealogical charts in the *Imola Psalter*, for example (perhaps made in Winchester some time after 1204), Ashley and Sheingorn note that 'the inclusion of the matrilineal genealogy in juxtaposition with the Tree of Jesse, the traditional image illustrating the patriarchal descent of Jesus, suggests that the patrons of these manuscripts were consciously stating their Salomite views' (*Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Introduction, p. 14, and fig. 2, p. 15 [Imola, Biblioteca Comunale, 100, fol. 10v]).

[51] For Wace's version of the apocryphal genealogy of Mary, see the Appendix. On the development of the cult of St Anne in the early Christian and Byzantine traditions, see Ashley and Sheingorn *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Introduction, pp. 6–17.

[52] Preliminary findings of Blacker's research into the anonymous Assumption narratives suggest that there may be at least two if not three anonymous versions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In his three-text edition, Pantel posited two versions besides Wace's, a shorter anonymous version represented by MS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 350 (also printed by Camille Chabaneau as

Assumption narrative that is sometimes attributed to Gautier de Coinci from the early thirteenth century and the Assumption narrative contained within Herman de Valenciennes's *Bible* from the late twelfth.[53] Wace's version is largely based on the *Transitus Mariae*, which itself is preserved in a number of versions (Beyers, pp. 381–82 nn. 66–70). The version edited by Constantin von Tischendorf, commonly referred to as the *Transitus B*^{1} (one of the two *Pseudo-Melito* versions), appears to be Wace's principal source, if we can judge by the fact that both *B*^{1} and Wace omit Paul from the group of apostles present at Mary's death and burial.[54]

Other elements found in Wace suggest that he may also have relied on traditions or versions other than those of the *Transitus* as found in the *Pseudo-Melito* (*Transitus B*^{1} and *B*^{2}) (Beyers, pp. 386–91; Ina Spiele, ed., Herman's *Bible*, pp. 108–15). One possible example of either a blended tradition or Wace's invention involves the meeting of the apostles requested by the Virgin (in speaking with an angel, vv. 1324–30). Their arrival takes place in two phases: the narrative in vv. 1389–97 tells how John was transported on a cloud from Ephesus where he had been preaching and set before the house in Mount Zion. When the Virgin sees him, she instructs him in the preparations for the funeral cortege (vv. 1400–30). John declares his need for the other apostles, at which point they arrive, transported by a cloud. At that moment the Virgin asks them how they managed to get

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vv. 3668–3971 of his edition of the *Roman de saint Fanuel* based on this manuscript [1885, pp. 250–58]), and a longer version represented by Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3517, which he tentatively attributed to Gautier de Coinci and edited along with Wace's *M* (following Mancel and Trébutien's edition, base manuscript, Paris, BNF, fr. 25532). Meyer posited two versions, a longer one represented by Paris, BNF, fr. 1807, and a shorter one represented by Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 350 (review of Chabaneau, ed., *Le Roman de saint Fanuel*, p. 470) and Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 5201 ('*Le Roman des Trois Ennemis de l'homme*', Appendix, pp. 55–56; see also id., 'Légendes hagiographiques', pp. 364–66). The relationship between these anonymous versions and those of Wace and Gautier de Coinci—once the latter attribution has been established—remains to be determined (see also n. 60 below).

[53] Ina Spiele, ed., *Li romanz de Dieu et de sa mère d'Herman de Valenciennes*. This work is often called Herman's *Bible*, and towards the end there is a section on the Assumption. Although in some manuscripts of that poem, the Assumption section appears as a separate text, it is not commonly considered by scholars to be a separate text (see Dean and Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 267).

[54] Beyers, pp. 383–84. However, Beyers acknowledges that only an extensive study of the manuscript traditions can confirm this tentative identification (p. 384 n. 74). *Transitus B*^{2} (ed. Monika Haibach-Reinisch) appears to be the older of the two identified versions of the *Pseudo-Melito*, preserving more of the original details (Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, pp. 97–98; for a succinct discussion of the relationship between the *Transitus* versions, see chapter 3, pp. 66–100).

there so swiftly. John answers first, explaining how he himself had arrived (vv. 1467–70), followed by a couplet in the third person: 'And each of them said the same thing / From which land he came and how' (vv. 1471–72). In the version of the *Transitus* edited by André Wilmart (*Transitus W*) John arrives suddenly at the Virgin's home without any explanation of how or whence he came;[55] later John explains things to Peter and Andrew before they enter the Virgin's home. In the *Pseudo-Melito*[56] the Virgin asks for an explanation of how they all got there and it is narrated in a general way (by the third-person narrator). In the *CND* the manner of John's arrival is at first narrated in the third person (vv. 1389–97), but then it is also reported in direct discourse by John explicitly in relation to himself in response to the Virgin's question regarding the whole group (vv. 1467–70); John's short speech is a detail not found in either *W* or the *Pseudo-Melito*. As Beyers notes, the use of the double explanation may have been Wace's invention—though she does not mention his strong affinity for inserting direct address at frequent intervals, which seems the most likely explanation in this case—or it could have been present in an unidentified *Pseudo-Melito* model or related source text (pp. 387–88). Regardless of the source of the short speech, it further serves to underscore John's importance amongst the apostles, one of Wace's main goals in this section of the poem.

In the *CND* the hostility of the Jews and their punishment also deviates from the *Pseudo-Melito*. In the *Transitus W* the principal priests of the Jews decide to kill the apostles and burn Mary's body; armed with swords and sticks, they approach and are struck blind. One of the crowd attacks the bier, seizing the palm frond (Wilmart, 38, p. 349). In the *Pseudo-Melito* it is the high priest who approaches the casket to throw the body on to the ground; there is no mention of an armed attack or the palm frond (at this point in the narrative) and the punishment of the people is mentioned after that of the high priest (Tischendorf, *Transitus Mariae B*, XI, 3, pp. 131–32). As in the case of the embroidered narrative of John's translation, Wace includes details of an armed attack and a narrative of one individual in the crowd who seizes the palm frond (from *W* or another source), but

[55] Ed. Wilmart, 'L'Ancien Récit latin de l'Assomption', 7, pp. 329–30. See also Beyers, p. 388.

[56] Unless otherwise noted, *Pseudo-Melito* refers here to both the *Transitus* B^1 and B^2 versions collectively. Each contains a prologue attributing the text to Melito, bishop of Sardes, in the second century, with the claim that the bishop heard the story directly from John the Evangelist (Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 83).

the individual is a high priest or 'master' (v. 1631) as in the *Pseudo-Melito*; Wace, however, implies that is the 15,000 Jews and not just the priests (or priest) who are on the attack (vv. 1641–42). Although it is possible that Wace used a combined source that has not yet been identified, it is also possible that he combined the details himself, as he did in the *Rou*, two decades later, when he related two versions of the Norman Conquest, i.e. accounts of the circumstances surrounding Edward's designation of William as his heir (English and Norman), supplying the metanarrative comment that he had found both versions in writing (III, vv. 5597–604). In terms of the punishment itself Wace appears to have followed *W*: the transgressors are punished by blindness in both the *CND* (v. 1645) and *W* (Wilmart, 45–46, pp. 354–55) where Peter offers the choice of belief and sight or remaining in blindness (with no further punishment) (vv. 1670–700). In B^2 Peter offers an even harsher choice to those struck by blindness—believe and see again or die—and those who do not chose the conversion die (Haibach-Reinisch, XIV, pp. 105, 161), and in B^1 Peter offers the same choice as in *W* (and Wace), but the unbelievers ultimately die, not right away but they meet their end in the following passage (without the same causal relationship between unbelief and death) (Tischendorf, *Transitus Mariae B*, XIV, pp. 133–34).

Although Wace demonstrates discretion in emphasising the empty tomb and not the actual disappearance of the body, he departs from the tradition influenced by Pseudo-Jerome, a treatise on the Assumption attributed to Jerome that refused to fill in the gap left by the Gospels' silence on the corporeal Assumption of Mary, contending that no one knew Mary's end.[57] Like Pseudo-Jerome, Wace concentrates on the exemplary dignity of the Virgin, but he goes further in also adopting the reasoning of the doctrine of Pseudo-Augustine, which explains the possibility of the Assumption in these terms: *decuit*, *potuit*, *voluit*, *ergo fecit*, an argument also articulated by Wace's contemporary, Eadmer, among others, in the context of arguments in favour of an Immaculate Conception of Mary at this time when both the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception were controversial and not yet part of accepted dogma: (i) *decuit* ('it was fitting') held that

[57] The Pseudo-Jerome text, *Cogitis me*, a forgery generally attributed to Paschasius Radbertus (ca. 790–865), concentrated on the exceptional dignity of the Virgin but did not fill in the void in the Gospels regarding the corporeal Assumption of Mary (Epistle 9, '*Cogitis me*', *PL*, vol. 30, col. 130; ed. Albert Ripberger). Since it was so influential, it was thought to have significantly delayed acceptance of the doctrine of the corporeal Assumption (Beyers, pp. 394–95). See also Clayton, '*Ælfric and *Cogitis me*'.

the flesh of the Virgin, having given birth to Jesus, was pure and 'sanz porreture', and thus worthy of the Assumption (vv. 1747–54); (ii) Wace provides three examples of *potuit* ('he was able to do it') to prove that Jesus had the power to resurrect Mary's body, i.e. the dead reborn the day of his Resurrection (vv. 1763–64), Jonah and the whale (vv. 1775–80) and the three youths cast into the fiery furnace by the order of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3: 13–28) (vv. 1781–88); and (iii) *voluit, ergo fecit* ('he wished it and therefore did it') (vv. 1789–94).[58]

In addition, Wace departs from the *Pseudo-Melito*, which is alone in specifying that Mary's soul was reunited with her body on earth, Jesus having brought her soul with him when he returned to her tomb after three days (Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, p. 93), though the departure is one of omission rather than commission. Wace ends the passage on the Assumption without declaring the exact location of the reuniting of body and soul, thereby avoiding a potential doctrinal consideration (that the body could not be without a soul, even for the time it would take to transport it to heaven). As a rhetorical (and possibly theological) strategy, it is in this passage where Wace tells of his beliefs, following the statement that 'No one could find the body / For God had brought it back to life' (vv. 1739–40):

> If asked what I believe
> About the body, if it is alone in heaven
> Together with the soul,
> To this I shall respond briefly:
> I believe this: that she was brought back to life
> And is alive, better than when she was born. (vv. 1741–46)

In this way Wace provides the necessary information to his audience—that the Virgin's body was brought back to life and reunited with her soul—but in a form that demands less verification, as a matter of faith and not as historical narrative (i.e. the 'facts', 'what happened').[59] By

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[58] Beyers, pp. 394–95. For the Pseudo-Augustine, see *De assumptione beatae Mariae virginis*, *PL*, vol. 40, cols 1141–48; on Eadmer, see Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 432–36. See also Marilyn McCord Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception', esp. pp. 5 and 24.

[59] It would appear that Wace is expressing a belief in an Assumption with a resurrection. On the historical and textual development of the distinctions between the doctrines of the Dormition and the Assumption (with and without resurrection), see Simon C. Mimouni, 'De l'Ascension du Christ à l'Assomption de la Vierge'. Mimouni draws a distinction between what he sees as three doctrinal categories, depending on the following concepts: Dormition without resurrection, Dormition and Assumption, and Assumption with or without resurrection, to be seen not as stages but as different layers of belief with

adding his beliefs to the 'facts' related earlier in the text, Wace also remains in line with the *Pseudo-Melito*, which appears to be, in Clayton's words, 'the first Western apocryphal text to place Mary's body and soul together in heaven, rather than in a paradise separate from heaven' (*The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, p. 94). The controversial nature of this dogma is still in evidence today, as Pope Pius XII's 1950 definition of Mary's Assumption, body and soul, into heaven does not pronounce as to whether the Virgin experienced death at all (Mimouni, 'De l'Ascension du Christ à l'Assomption de la Vierge', p. 158).

Themes, Characterisation and Style

Although editions emphasise the unity of Wace's *CND*, it can also be viewed as essentially four poems—perhaps it is better termed a compilation or cycle dedicated to the Virgin—connected between the second and third poem by a transition section. United by its exclusive devotion to Mary and Marian concerns, this work is unique.[60] The first section, the

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respect on the one hand to the final end of Mary and on the other to what became of her body and her soul in the world beyond (pp. 160–61). See also Martin Jugie, *La Mort et l'Assomption de la Sainte Vierge*.

[60] The first group or cycle from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to postdate Wace is a group of five poems that have sometimes been attributed to Gautier de Coinci, since they are found only in manuscripts of his *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (cf. Olivier Collet, 'L'Œuvre en contexte', p. 21): (1) the *Genealogie Nostre Dame*, though its editor V. Frederic Koenig finds the attribution of this work as well as the whole cycle to Gautier dubious (p. 207); (2) the *Nativité saint Jehan Baptistre et li fait Jhesucrist* (unedited); (3) the *Nativité Nostre Dame* (ed. Robert Reinsch, who attributes it to Gautier, 'Dichtungen Gautiers von Coinsy, I', pp. 73–77, and ed. Collet, who also attributes it to Gautier, 'Gautier de Coinci: les œuvres d'attribution incertaine', p. 46); (4) the *Nativité Jhesucrist* (ed. Reinsch, who attributes it to Gautier, 'Dichtungen Gautiers von Coinsy, II', pp. 233–37); (5) an anonymous Assumption narrative (entitled *Assomption* in Pantel's edition, MS Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3517, who tentatively attributes it to Gautier, p. 13). For discussions of these possible attributions, either singly or collectively, see Arthur Långfors, *Miracles de Gautier de Coinci*, Masami Okubo, 'Autour de la *Nativité Nostre Dame*', and Meyer, 'Légendes hagiographiques', pp. 357, 366–67; see also Collet, who calls for a reevaluation of Gautier's corpus in light of the structural and thematic implications of attributing all five to Gautier ('L'Œuvre en contexte'). The second group or cycle of Marian texts in French to postdate Wace is also made up of five works: 1) the *Roman de saint Fanuel* (ed. Chabaneau); 2) the *Histoire de Marie et de Jésus* (Boulton has an edition in preparation); 3) the *Passion des jongleurs* (ed. Anne J. A. Perry; see also the ed. by Francis A. Foster, *The Northern Passion*, vol. 2); 4) the *Descente de Jésus aux enfers* (unedited); and another anonymous Assumption narrative (entitled *Assomption*, ed. Pantel, MS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 350; see n. 52 above). See also *Le Roman de saint Fanuel*, ed. Musil, p. iii, and Boulton, 'Manuscript Tradition'. Although Gautier's authorship has not been definitively

Établissement, is largely historical and polemical, seeking both to explain the origin of the celebration of the feast of the Conception in England and also to encourage its promulgation. The remaining three sections each treat an aspect of the four dogmas as defined by the Church: (i) Mary's divine motherhood; (ii) her virginity; (iii) the Immaculate Conception, sparing her the stain of original sin (proclaimed in 1854); (iv) her Assumption (declared in 1950). In Wace's text Mary's purity is foremost, followed by her role as Jesus's mother and intercessor for mankind. Given the early date of the poem, Mary's role as symbolic mother of the Church is as yet relatively undeveloped.

Mary is not a principal figure in the *Établissement*, though she does intercede to save Helsin and his crew (but only after Helsin promises the angel that he will establish the feast of the Conception in Mary's honour). The angel himself can be seen as an intercessor between the sailors and Mary or as an extension of divine will in response to the prayers of Helsin and the sailors. Although St Nicholas is commonly considered to be the patron saint of sailors, in this instance the sailors pray to God and the Virgin, who is referred to as the 'blessed queen' (v. 117), an image growing in popularity, as seen in the first appearance of the *Salve Regina* in a Cistercian antiphonary in 1140 (Marina Warner, *Alone of all her Sex*, p. 115).

In addition to the fact that Wace states that the feast of the Conception was first celebrated in the time of William the Conqueror (which it was not), the most striking features of the *Établissement* are the description of a storm at sea (vv. 67–87, or 12% of the narrative length) and Helsin's conversation with the angel (vv. 100–46, or 27% of the narrative). The description of the storm in detail and length, the darkness of the sky, the roughness of the sea and the fear of the sailors are very similar to parallel passages in Wace's chronicles and are certainly a factor in determining Wace's authorship of this section, if it were in doubt (see note to v. 160). The conversation with the angel, while religious in context, is remarkably practical. Helsin is very goal-oriented and driven, two features often characteristic of speakers involved in information exchanges in Wace's chronicles: 'Now that you have apprised me of the feast, / Now may I be informed of the service', Helsin commands (vv. 137–38).[61] The angel also appears anxious to get the job done and speaks directly to the point

established for these three texts, for reference's sake the *Assomption*, the *Genealogie Nostre Dame* and the *Nativité Jhesucrist* appear in the Bibliography under Gautier de Coinci.

[61] See, for example, in the *Roman de Rou* the exchanges between Master Bernard and the burgess (III, vv. 1991–2014), Gunnor and her husband, Duke Richard I (III, vv. 629–45)

of each of Helsin's questions, giving the abbot specific instructions on the content of the service for the feast and telling him which feast he is referring to in the first place: 'The conception I am referring to / Is in December, on the eighth day; / On the eighth day, towards the beginning, / Should the feast be celebrated' (vv. 131–34); 'The whole of that [service] used for the Nativity, / Which is eight days into September, / Use the same one in December, / The whole service without any changes, / Except for the word "nativity". / Wherever one says "nativity", / There you will say "conception" ' (vv. 140–46).

In terms of rhetorical style, these exchanges are not only examples of Wace's tendency to use dialogue where his sources more often use third-person narrative (Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 44–50), but also of his thoroughness and use of repetition and chiasmus. In the context of the *Brut*, M. Malkiel Jirmounsky points out that motifs are often developed through concrete details, often painstakingly, in such a way that 'toutes les possibilités sont énumérées' ('all eventualities are listed') ('Essai des analyses des procédés littéraires', p. 269). Similarly, in an effort to define the elements characteristic of all of Wace's later works to varying degrees, Einar Ronsjö in his edition of the *Life of St Nicholas* notes oratory questions, chiasmus, maxims (*sentences*), apostrophe, antithesis, juxtaposition of synonymous terms and personal observation (p. 21).[62] To this should be added variations on the 'ne sai' topos, which Wace used extensively in the *Brut* and the *Rou* as a truth claim: what he could not verify he would not state and he would also let the reader/listener know when those passages occurred.[63] In the *Assomption*, referring to the song sung by the angels

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and Harold Godwinson and his brother, Gyrth (III, vv. 7010–40), and in the *Roman de Brut* the series of exchanges between Merlin and Vortigern (vv. 7439–522).

[62] Ronsjö claims that these elements are not yet present or are rare in the *Life of St Margaret* (p. 21); Ronsjö (p. 20) and Keller (p. 40) both assert in their editions of the text that the *Margaret* predated the composition of the *CND*. Although less convinced, Elizabeth A. Francis was inclined to see the *Margaret* as a 'less mature' work than either the *CND* or the *Nicholas* (ed., pp. xvi–xvii). However, see the reassessments of dating and style in the Introduction to the *Life of St Margaret* below (pp. 152, 174–75).

[63] As noted by Penny Eley and Philip Bennett, 'statements beginning "ne sai" are in fact the commonest form of authorial/narratorial intervention in the *Rou* as a whole' ('The Battle of Hastings', p. 58 n. 52). Given the preponderance of truth claims based on ignorance in his chronicles (as opposed to affirmative or more conventional declarations), Peter Damian-Grint suggests that Wace 'somewhat perversely appears to base his explicit authorisation very largely, indeed almost exclusively, on claiming ignorance', linking ignorance and even silence with truthfulness, employing a ' "silence rather than untruth" *topos*' ('Truth, Trust and Evidence in the Anglo-Norman "Estoire" ', pp. 74–5). See also Blacker, 'Narrative Decisions', pp. 56–58, Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 102–03, Damian-Grint, *The New*

accompanying Jesus when he comes to claim Mary's soul, Wace says: 'Lors chant ne vos puis je pas dire' (v. 1497). In the account of the disappearance of Mary's body, preceding the long personal aside in which the poet describes his beliefs on the subject (vv. 1741–94), Wace comments:

> Sempres fu d'iluec remuëz,
> N'i fu puis veüz ne trovez,
> Ne puis dire ne afermer,
> Ne je nel vueil ci aconter,
> Que hom ne feme qui vesquist
> Puis cele hore le cors veïst. (vv. 1719–24)

As mentioned above, it is not surprising that Wace would include this kind of a disclaimer on such a controversial subject, though he does manage, through rhetorical sleight of hand, to include the information, but in the context of his beliefs and not that of 'facts'.

In his presentation of Anna and Joachim, Wace presents a fairly faithful blend of the *De Nativitate* and the *Protevangelium*, with a few departures.[64] In general terms, when he does depart from them it is in the use of French vocabulary that has come to be associated with courtly literature, though this usage is not extensive, e.g. 'Lealment e bien s'entr'amerent' (v. 192); 'Anna fu dame molt preisiee, / Mut loee, molt enseigniee' (vv. 425–26); '"Anna, feme boneüree, / Joiose e liee te puez faire, / Joachin tis amis repaire"' (vv. 552–54). Another departure is found in the double speech by the angel in which the examples of patriarchs and their wives who did not bear children until late in life are divided by gender. In Wace the angel tells Joachim about Abraham and Jacob and later tells Anna about Sarah and Rachel, whereas in the *De Nativitate* the angel tells only Joachim about Sarah, Rachel, Samson and Samuel (Beyers, p. 372). This reorganisation of the angel's speech can be seen as according a larger, or even egalitarian, role to Anna. Wace also transforms a passage in indirect speech in the *De Nativitate* into an extended dialogue between the high priest Issachar and Joachim, as he turns him away from the temple (vv. 238–43, 245–54, 256–74, 276–80; Beyers, p. 371). Although Joachim

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Historians, pp. 166–68 and 200–03, Lim, 'Truth and the Normans', and Keller, ed. of the *Life of St Margaret*, p. 45.

[64] Beyers proposes that in the *Conception* section Wace drew upon scenes in a Latin version of the *Protevangelium*, yet not necessarily from the *Pseudo-Matthew* recension (p. 369 n. 35). It is not impossible, however, that Wace may have found a version of the *trinubium Annae* in a manuscript related to the Q family of the *Pseudo-Matthew* (see nn. 39 and 42 above).

literally has the last word, he cannot overturn the judgment of the high priest; dejected, he sets off for the desert with his shepherds and flocks essentially to mourn and pray. Anna is portrayed sympathetically, as she is reproached by her chambermaid for not dressing festively to go to the temple (vv. 441–54), and again in her joy on receiving from the angel the news of Mary's future conception and birth (vv. 499–504).

Wace also glorifies Anna by providing his translation of the *trinubium*: the *Histoire des Trois Maries* shows Anna to be the matriarch of a large, extended family referred to in the later Middle Ages as the Holy Kinship. In fact, Wace was either unaware of the potential for conflict between the newly-proposed immaculate nature of Mary's conception and the *trinubium* or chose to ignore it: Fulbert of Chartres (ca. 960–1028) argued that the 'purity of the Virgin's parents was surely incompatible with multiple parenthood. It was not fitting that they should be polluted by the propagation of more children'.[65] On the other hand, the narrative of the three Marys protects Mary's purity in that it provides mothers for Jesus's 'brothers': it makes James the Less and Joseph sons of Mary Cleophas and not of the Virgin Mary. Also, James the Greater and John the Evangelist are considered sons of Mary Salome and not of the Virgin. Although the core of this material is not a product of Wace's invention, he uses it to support a sustained picture of Mary's exceptional nature and her growing role within spiritual life.

Not only was Mary exemplary before birth, she was exemplary as a child:

> Issi cum Marie cresseit,
> Plus amendot e plus saveit,
> L'enor de li e la bonté,
> Ot tut sun aage passé,
> Quar mieldrë ere e plus sage
> Que nule altre de sun aage. (vv. 605–10)

At the age of fourteen, she does not wish to follow tradition and marry, but rather chooses to remain a virgin and serve the Lord, protesting in a spirited fashion (vv. 652–64). Her spirited protest turns to obedience, however, when she is visited by the angel Gabriel and realises that she will remain chaste and serve beyond marrying Joseph, who was chosen for her by a divine sign (vv. 793–800). Mary's dialogue with the angel, in her many

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[65] Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Introduction, p. 12; Fulbert of Chartres, *Sermo VI*, 'In ortu almae virginis Mariae inviolatae', *PL*, vol. 141: cols 325–31 (col. 326).

questions about the unusual conception and miraculous birth to follow, also demonstrates Wace's characteristic thoroughness (vv. 823–34). The monumental nature of the impregnation is emphasised by Wace's use of anaphora, another characteristic of his rhetorical style (particularly repetition at the opening of consecutive lines):

> Qui tot a fait, tot veit, tot ot,
> Qui mer, qui terre, qui ciel clot,
> Qui est defors, qui est dedenz,
> Qui fait les ploies e les venz,
> Qui toz tens ert e toz tens fu. (vv. 861–65)

Although the words 'Nostre Seignor' appear in v. 858, the lines that follow have an almost iconoclastic tone, created by the use of the pronoun 'qui', as if to avoid the noun when referring to God. In addition, Wace tones down Joseph's anger upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, in comparison with the *Protevangelium* and the *Pseudo-Matthew*, in which Joseph's lamentations and reproaches are described in a dramatic scene (Beyers, p. 374).

In the *Assomption* Wace continues to add other aspects to the portrait of Mary found in the *Conception*. He combines the first part of Mary's speech to her relatives and neighbours, in which she explains (vv. 1367–87) that when someone dies two angels come for the soul, one from heaven and the other from hell (this is also found in the version of the *Transitus* edited by Wilmart, but not in the *Pseudo-Melito*), with the end found in the *Pseudo-Melito* (Beyers, p. 386). At the end, Mary reassures her listeners: 'But in my case let there be no fear / That any evil power can cause any disruption for me / Or ever dare to approach me' (vv. 1383–87).[66] By putting a form of doctrine into Mary's speech, she becomes a teacher like Jesus, while retaining her motherly compassion.

In fact, Mary's motherliness may be paramount in Wace: unlike Herman de Valenciennes, who emphasises in his *Bible* the spousal relationship between Jesus and Mary (ed. Spiele, p. 113), Wace stresses the mother-son relationship.[67] In a speech that is an expansion of the Latin model,

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[66] This speech is not found in the anonymous Assumption narratives in four manuscripts Blacker has collated thus far: MSS Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 350; Bern, Burgermeister Bibliothek, 634; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 20; Paris, BNF, fr. 1807.

[67] On other points of comparison, both stylistic and thematic, between Wace and Herman, see Boulton, 'The Lives of the Virgin by Wace and Herman de Valenciennes'.

'Veni preciossima margarita, intra receptaculum vitae aeternae',[68] Wace devotes twenty-one lines to Jesus's praise of Mary's holiness in part as his spouse, but particularly her function as a mother, nourisher and provider of shelter (vv. 1499–1520). In addition, in Wace Mary's love for Jesus and her grief upon his death are expressed, not simply in speech, but in the form of a prayer (vv. 1343–62).[69]

Without diminishing Jesus's role, it is probably John the Evangelist with whom Mary is seen to have the closest relationship in the *Assomption*, due in part to the tradition of Jesus's conferral of Mary's safekeeping to John at Calvary (John 19: 26–27). Wace reinforces John's role as caretaker by emphasising his worthiness in both the *Trois Maries* and the *Assomption*. In the *Trois Maries*, the narrative of the disappearance of John's body at his death, replaced by manna (vv. 1273–78), both echoes the Resurrection narrative and foreshadows the Assumption narrative, raising John to a level surpassed only by Jesus and Mary. While Wace adheres to the apocryphal tradition in praising John's virginity, he goes further by including a thirty-line commentary on the difference between virginity and all other virtues: in the case of other virtues they can be lost but regained though effort, but virginity once lost cannot be regained (vv. 1231–60). The theme is repeated several times within the commentary, ending with the final pronouncement: 'Virginity works differently; / Recovery is later impossible. / One cannot recover virginity later, / Once it has gone' (vv. 1255–58). In stylistic terms this passage is characteristic of Wace's *œuvre* in its thoroughness of detail, its semantic and thematic repetition and in the fact that it also appears to be a personal aside, or at least an aside with great personal importance to the poet.

Conclusion

Despite its uniqueness as the first vernacular collection of material focusing on the life of the Virgin, Wace's *Conception Nostre Dame* (*CND*) is not well known today, though the number of surviving manuscripts indicates that it was widely appreciated in the medieval period. In addition to being

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[68] Cf. Beyers, p. 393. 'Come, you most precious pearl, enter into the receptacle of eternal life', trans. Elliott, 'Assumption of the Virgin [*Pseudo-Melito*]', *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 711 (ed. Tischendorf, *Transitus Mariae B*, VI, p. 128).

[69] H. Lausberg suggests that it was love that caused Mary's death ('Zur literarischen Gestaltung', §17, p. 31).

the earliest French Marian narrative and in many ways *sui generis*, Wace's poem is not only a composite, but it can also be viewed as a cycle of texts thematically united and conceived by one author, thus giving it an almost encyclopedic range. Because of its subject matter, and also because of its scope, the *CND* resists ready comparisons with other saints' Lives of this early period; the closest vernacular parallels for the *Conception* section would be the *enfances* narratives of Jesus, but parallels of genre for the *Trois Maries* and the *Assomption* sections are more difficult to identify. Mimouni suggests, however, that the Latin texts upon which Wace most likely based the *Conception* and the *Assomption* should be considered as hagiographical writing, a perspective that might explain, on the one hand, the penetration of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon versions into the liturgy and, on the other hand, their survival in large numbers of homiletic and hagiographic codices ('Les Transitus Mariae', p. 128; Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, p. 2). Manuscripts in which the *CND* is found are also largely collections containing saints' Lives and homiletic texts, though some are devoted primarily to Marian texts (such as Paris, BNF, fr. 818 and fr. 25532).

Wace's *Établissement* section in particular is striking due to its polemical nature, as it unequivocally proposes celebration of the Conception of the Virgin Mary, at a time when her cult was growing among the people, but when there was also significant resistance to the feast, particularly among high-ranking clergy, most notably Bernard of Clairvaux. However, Wace does not enter into the finer points of Mary's preservation from sin before, as well as after, birth, as did, for example, Peter Lombard.[70] Wace's vision of Mary is one of complete worthiness, as if to prepare the audience for whatever positive arguments the theologians could later provide to support the belief in her sanctity.

Wace's synthetic approach, as seen in both the *Brut* and the *Rou* (historical chronicles based on multiple sources), also contributes to the uniqueness of this poem (or series of poems). His narrative choices in the *CND* have the cumulative effect of raising the story of Mary to nearly the level of that of Jesus: e.g. the emphasis on the pain experienced by Joachim and Anna because of their sterility, found in the *Protevangelium* but not in the *De Nativitate*; his expansion of Anna's humiliation scene

[70] Peter Lombard (†1164) argued that Mary as a human had been conceived in original sin, as had all humans, but that, as the Mother of God, she had been purified during the interval between her conception and birth (Warner, *Alone of all her Sex*, p. 241).

at home found in the *Protevangelium* but not in the *De Nativitate*, as if to make a stronger parallel with Joachim's humiliation in public; his use of the first visit from the angel to Anna and the visit from the two men in white (from the *Protevangelium*) followed by a second visit from the angel (from the *De Nativitate*), further accentuating the exceptional and miraculous nature of this announcement of Mary's conception.

Wace's *CND* plays a key role in the promulgation of the image of Mary as a powerful figure in her own right, in addition to her role as intercessor between humankind and Jesus. On one level, Wace's presentation of Mary underscores her purity in a more life-affirming vein than many narratives of virgin martyrs, i.e. Wace's emphasis is on devotion and efficacy of devotion rather than on abstinence and martyrdom. Rather than insisting on the absence of sexual intercourse in Mary's marriage with Joseph (though he does include a version of the *trinubium Annae* to explain how Jesus's 'brothers', who appear in the Bible, were cousins and not brothers), Wace focuses on Mary's devotion in motherhood, through her interactions with Jesus and John. Whether intentionally or not, Wace presents a figure of the Virgin Mary that is much more imitable by ordinary women and not simply reserved for imitation by virgin martyrs or cloistered nuns. As seen in his discourse on virginity at the end of the *Trois Maries*, Wace did place a high value on virginity, but, in addition to reinforcing John and Mary's sanctity, the exalting of virginity appears to be presented as more applicable to those whose lives were predicated on spiritual commitments, rather than being universally applicable.

In addition to her purity and maternal attributes, Wace also stresses Mary's humanity and humility through, for example, the dramatisation of her parents' humble devotion to God and to each other and their suffering while childless, descriptions of her service to God in the temple as a miraculous child (vv. 603–40), and her speech to gather family and neighbours reassuring them regarding her approaching death (vv. 1363–86). Mary's exalted roles as Queen of Heaven and Jesus's spouse—not yet central in this early vernacular cycle—are referred to only in passing, as if for recognition's sake, but not to call attention to those aspects of the growing tradition. Only once (with a single lyrical repetition) is she referred to as the Queen of Heaven ('reïne el ciel coronee', v. 1516), in Jesus's speech in which she is also referred to only once as his spouse (v. 1500). The main references to her are as 'sainte Marie', 'Nostre Dame', 'ma dame sainte Marie' (v. 180), 'la dame', 'la virgene' and 'la sainte Virgene' (vv. 746, 836, 1798).

In the *CND*, as in the *Roman de Brut* and the *Roman de Rou*, Wace shows himself to be an innovator who mined multiple sources to bring important versions of history to a wider audience than those literate in Latin. As in the *Brut*, where he thought it wiser to omit Merlin's Prophecies than to translate them, or interpret them incorrectly, and as in the *Rou*, where he declined to favour the Norman over the English version of the Conquest, but instead presented both sides, in the *CND* he chose to celebrate Mary without entering into the finer points of theological discussion. He refrains from giving an opinion as to whether Mary was conceived without the taint of original sin or whether her life in the body ended with a corporeal death. His goal was to bring to his French-speaking audience information they could not otherwise have acquired, at least not as efficiently or as economically. At a time when the public was eager to learn as much as they could about Mary, beyond what was commonly understood in church or what they knew from the Bible, Wace provided an encyclopedic text on the history of the observance, birth, devotion, passion, death and Assumption of the Virgin and the genealogy of her family on her mother's side. He composed a work that in form and scope has never been duplicated. Ultimately, Wace's presentation of Mary was fully in keeping with the goals of its distant source, the *Protevangelium*, a text that was, as Elliott notes, 'also of relevance for encouraging the enhancement of Mary [in] that she is seen in PJ [*Protevangelium of James*] as an instrument of divine salvation in her own right' (*Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 51).

It is difficult to judge where Wace's contribution was greater—in his participation in the history of observance, in the growth of Marian belief or in the acknowledgement of the other family tree, the matriarchal line or Holy Kinship of St Anne, joined with the Tree of Jesse, participating in, as Patrick Geary has put it, 'the process by which in the most important family in Christian history, a founding mother was substituted for a founding father' (*Women at the Beginning*, p. 60). With regard to the matriarchal line, it is not clear either whether Wace was programmatically proposing a secondary role for the patriarchal line, or whether, as in the case of the Norman and English versions of Harold and William's negotiations before the Conquest, he was simply offering up both sides of the matter for the edification of his audience and providing them with the opportunity to reach their own conclusions. In the case of his chronicles, Wace expected his audience to listen and think. In the case of the *CND*, he expected them to listen, think and believe. For French speakers, whether they were English or French, the *Conception Nostre Dame* was supposed

to provide everything about Mary they might not have learned at court, at school or through attending religious services. In this collection of texts Wace does not appear to have shied away from controversy—seen especially in the *Établissement*—neither did he actively seek it out, as noted in his equivocation about the Virgin's body after death in the *Assomption*. By seeking to present Mary on the level of an 'instrument of divine salvation in her own right' (Elliott, p. 51), as the opposite of Eve whose actions are capable of reversing the errors of the latter and more (vv. 1083–110), Wace gave to that figure a comprehensive treatment never before received in vernacular historiography or literature, in turn, by association, transforming his text into a major cultural document in its own right.

*Vita sancte Marie Virginis**

El nom Dé, qui nos doignt sa grace, fol. 61r
Oëz que nos dist maistre Gace:
En quel tens, coment e par qui
Fu comencié e establi,
Que la feste fu celebree,
Que conceüe e engendree
Fu ma dame sainte Marie.
Onques n'en fu parole oïe
Que a nul tens anceis fist on
Feste de sa conception,
Deci al tens le rei Guillalme
Qui les Engleis e le realme
Par force e par bataille prist,
Viles, chastels, citez conquist.
Homes i ot e morz e pris,
Li reis Aralz i fu ocis.
Dunc fu Guillalmes dus e reis,
Ducs des Normanz, reis des Engleis.
Quant li reis de Daneis oï fol. 61v
Del rei Aralt, de sun ami
Qu'il esteit morz, mut li pesa.
Nes e armes apareilla
E dist qu'en Engleterre ireit
E as Normanz se combatreit
Qui le rei Aralt orent mort
E la terre envaïe a tort.
Li reis Guillalmes quant le sot
Dolenz en fu, paor en ot;
Mander a fait bons chevaliers,
De plusors terres soldeiers.
Ses chastels e ses fermetez
Fist bien garnir e ses citez,
Cum cil qui mut saveit de guerre
E bien son enemi conquerre.
O ses barons se conseilla
Qu'en Danesmarche enveiera
Saveir se ja par nul endreit fol. 62r
As Daneis pais faire porreit.
Elsin, uns hom qui mut saveit,
De Ramesi abes esteit,
Qui mult par saveit bien parler
E un bien grant conseil doner.
Si esteit de grant eloquence
E parlot par grant sapience.
Li reis Guillalmes lu manda,

In the name of God—may he bestow his grace upon us—
Hear what Master Wace tells us,
At what time, how and through whom
It was begun and established
That the feast was celebrated,
On which my lady the Virgin Mary
Was conceived and begotten.
It has never been reported
That at any earlier time there had been
A feast for her conception,
Until the time of King William,
Who captured the English and the kingdom
Through force and through battle;
He conquered towns, castles and cities.*
Men were killed and captured there
And King Harold was killed.
Then William became duke and king,
Duke of the Normans, king of the English.
When the king of the Danes heard*
That King Harold, his friend,
Was dead, it upset him greatly.
He prepared ships and arms
And said that he would go to England
And do battle with the Normans,
Who had killed King Harold
And invaded the land wrongfully.
When King William found out about this,
He was distressed and fearful;
He summoned good knights,
Mercenaries from many lands.
His castles, his strongholds
And his cities he had strengthened,
As a man who was expert in the art of war
And in vanquishing his enemies.
He consulted his barons
About sending someone to Denmark
To find out whether in any way at all
He could have peace with the Danes.
Helsin, a very learned man,
Was abbot of Ramsey;
He was very skilled in the art of speech
And in giving weighty advice.*
He was a man of great eloquence
And spoke with great learning.
King William summoned him

En Danesmarche l'enveia.
Bailla lui mut bons garnemenz,
D'or e d'argent molt granz presenz,
Que al rei des Daneis portast,
Enseigne de pais li donast;
Si enquesist quant ce sereit
Que li navires s'esmovreit.
Helsim enz en la nef entra,
Bel oré ot, la mer pasa,
Al rei vint, si fist son present; fol. 62v
Cil le reçut mut bonement.
E as contes e as barons
De la terre dona granz dons,
E tels i ot qui il promist;
L'ost fist remaindre, tant lor dist.*
Quant il ot bien fait son afaire,
O sa gent se mist el repaire.
Li reis li a doné congié,
Richement l'en a enveié.
A la nef vindrent, enz entrerent,
En mer s'enpeinstrent si siglerent.
En halte mer ja loinz esteient,
Fors ciel e mer rien ne veeient.
Dunc comence mer a mesler,
Undes a creistre, a reverser;
Nercist li ciels, nercist la nue,
Mut fu la mer tost esmeüe.
Li venz vint a la nef devant fol. 63r
O merveillos torment e grant,
De totes parz la mer l'asalt.
Rompent cordes, li tres lor falt.
Li marinier orent paor,
Onques de mort n'orent graignor.
L'uns ne set l'altre conseillier,
Ne l'uns ne puet l'altrë aidier;
Li plus sage poi i saveient,
E li plus prot poi i veeient.
Tot unt laissié le governer
E vunt galcrant parmi la mer.*
Chascuns se gist e crie e plore,
Grant paor unt, ne gardent l'ore
Que li tormenz les acravent;
Deu reclaiment omnipotent
E ma dame sainte Marie,
Que vers son fil face aïe

And sent him to Denmark.
He gave him very fine equipment
And lavish presents of gold and silver,
Which he was to take to the king of the Danes,
Give them to him as a token of peace
And find out when it would be
That the fleet would set sail.*
Helsin went aboard the ship;
The wind was good and he crossed the sea.
He came to the king and gave him his present;
The king received him very cordially.
To the counts and the barons
Of the land Helsin gave great gifts
And to some he made promises;
He got the army to remain at home, he said so much to them.*
When he had accomplished his business successfully,
He set off home with his men.
The king gave him leave to depart,
Sending him on his way in splendour.
They came to the ship and went on board;
They put to sea and sailed away.
Soon they were far out to sea
And could see nothing other than sky and sea.
Then the sea began to turn rough,
And the waves to increase and churn.
The sky turned black and the clouds turned black
And the sea was soon very choppy.
The wind veered to the front of the ship
With astounding and terrible ferocity;
The sea assailed the ship from all sides.
The ropes were broken and the sail failed them.
The sailors were afraid;
Never had they been more afraid of death.
They did not know how to comfort each other
And they were unable to give each other help;
The wisest of them had little idea
And the bravest could see little hope.
They stopped trying to steer the ship
And went drifting over the sea.*
Everyone lay down, cried out and wept;
They were very much afraid and lost track of the time
The storm had been laying them low.
They called upon Almighty God,
And my lady the Virgin Mary,
To bring help to her son;

En lor vie petit se fient, fol. 63v
Batent colpes, plorent e crient.
Tot erent al neier torné,
A Deu s'esteient comandé,
Quant uns angeles lor aparut
Qui dejoste la nef s'estut,
Si ert d'un vesqual vestement,
Apareilliez mut gentilment.
A cels de la nef se mostra,
E l'abé par nom apela:
'Helcim', dist il, 'redrece tei,
Lieve sus, vien parler a mei'.
Tuit cil de la nef s'esbaïrent
Quant il ce virent e oïrent.
Li abes Helcin se dreça,
Cum il ainz pot vers lui ala.
Dunc prist li angeles a parler:
'Helcim, se tu t'en vels aler
E se de la mer vels issir fol. 64r
E sains en ton païs venir,
Voe, Helcim, que tu feras
Toz les anz mais que tu vivras
E a faire l'enseigneras
As iglises que tu porras
La sainte feste e le saint jor
Que la mere Nostre Seignor,
La reïne boneüree,
Fu conceüe e engendree.
Voe, Helcin, a celebrer
E as altres faire henorer
Le jor que ot engendrement
Sainte Marie charnalment,
Que fu conceüe en sa mere
E engendree de son pere.
Saches que cil qui la fera.
E vis e morz prot i avra.'
Helcim dist: 'Coment la ferai fol. 64v
Quant je le jor nomer ne sai
Que ço avint ne quant ce fu?'
Li mes Deu li a respondu:
'La conception que je di
En Decembre est a l'oisme di,
A l'oisme jor devers l'entree,
Deit la feste estre celebree'.
'Quel servise', dist il, 'ferun

They had little hope of remaining alive
And said their *mea culpa*, wept and wailed.
They were on the point of drowning
And had entrusted themselves to God,
When an angel appeared to them,
Standing alongside the ship;
He was very nobly clad
In an episcopal garment.
He made his presence known to those on board
And called to the abbot by name:
'Helsin', he said, 'get to your feet,
Rise and come and talk to me'.
All those on the ship were startled
When they saw and heard this.
Abbot Helsin stood up
And, as best he could, went towards him.
Then the angel began to speak:
'Helsin, if you wish to travel onwards,
And if you wish to leave the sea behind
And reach your country in good health,
Promise, Helsin, that you will celebrate,
All the years you have still to live,
And teach others to do so,
In the churches, as you are able,
The holy feast and the holy day
On which the mother of Our Lord,
The blessed queen,
Was conceived and begotten.
Promise, Helsin, to celebrate,
And to make others honour,
The day that saw the begetting
Of the Virgin Mary in the flesh,
When she was conceived in her mother
And begotten by her father.
Know that he who does this
Will profit from it, alive and dead.'
Helsin said: 'How can I celebrate it
When I do not know how to name the day
On which this happened or when it was?'
The messenger of God replied to him:
'The conception I am referring to
Is in December, on the eighth day;
On the eighth day, towards the beginning,
Should the feast be celebrated'.
'What service', he said, 'shall we use

Quant nos servise nen avun?
Quant tu la feste m'as aprise,
Or me renseigne le servise.'
Respondi l'angeles a l'abé:
'Tot cel de la nativeté
Qui est oit jorz dedenz Setembre,
Cel meïsme fai en Decembre,
Tot le servise sanz muance
Fors sol le non de la naissance.
La u nativité dit l'on, fol. 65r
Iluec diras conception.'
Quant l'abes ot içe oï,
A Damnedé graces rendi,
Voa a Deu mut bonement
Qu'il fera son comandement.
Quant li abes ot ce voé,
Ez vos l'angele d'iluec torné.
Li tens cessa, li venz chaï,
Cler tens fist, la mer enbelli,
E cil lor nef repareillierent,
En Engleterre repairierent.
Bon vent orent, bel tens e cler,
E belle e paisible la mer.
Repairiez est avuec sa gent
Li abes Helcin salvement.
Si reconta la o il pot
Ce que veü e oï ot.
Puis fist o grant devotion fol. 65v
Sun vivant la conception,
E mainte gent por li la firent*
Qui l'annuncement en oïrent.
Puis apareilla en sa vie,
A Ramesie en s'abaïe,
Que l'om ceste feste i fera
Tant com l'abaïe durra;
E en plusors leus la fait hun
E nos tuit faire la devun.
Quant nos la feste celebrun
Bien est que l'estoire diun
Bien fait la feste a celebrer,
Bien fait l'estoire a reconter,
E bien fait la chose a restraire
Dunt nos devun la feste faire. fol. 65v, l. 16
Or est donc bien que je vos die
De ma dame sainte Marie

When we do not have any service?
Now that you have apprised me of the feast,
Now may I be informed of the service.'
The angel replied to the abbot:
'The whole of that used for the Nativity,
Which is eight days into September,
Use the same one in December,
The whole service without any changes,
Except for the word "nativity".
Wherever one says "nativity",
There you will say "conception".'
When the abbot had heard this,
He gave thanks to the Lord God,
And promised God most sincerely
That he would do his bidding.
When the abbot had promised this,
Lo, the angel departed.
The storm ceased, the wind dropped,
The weather brightened and the sea was calmed;
They prepared their ship once more
And returned to England.
They had a good wind and fine, clear weather,
And the sea was fair and calm.
Abbot Helsin, with his men,
Returned safe and sound.*
He recounted wherever he could
What he had seen and heard.
Afterwards with great devotion he celebrated
The Conception, as long as he lived,
And because of him many people celebrated it*
Who had heard the proclamation.
Then he established, during his lifetime,
At his abbey in Ramsey,
That this feast would be celebrated
As long as the abbey lasted;
It was celebrated in many places,
And all of us ought to celebrate it.
Since we celebrate the feast,
It is right that we should tell the story,
Right to celebrate the feast
And right to recount the story,
And right to elucidate the reason
Why we should celebrate the feast.
So now is the right time for me to tell you
About my lady the Virgin Mary,

Coment fu conceüe e nee,
Coment norrie e mariëe.
Por ce ne vos cont je ne di* fol. 65v, l. 17
Que ne l'aiez asez oï,
Que Joachim ot non sis pere fol. 66r
E Anna fu dite sa mere.
De grant gent, de grant parenté
Fu Joachin, d'une cité,
De Nazaret de Galilee.
De Saforie Anna fu nee.
Par mariage s'asemblerent,
Lealment e bien s'entr'amerent.
Devant Deu e devant la gent
Se conteneient lealment.
Mut demenoent bone vie,
Sanz malvaistié e sanz folie.
Tot ce que il dui conquereient,
Tot le gaaing que il faiseient,
En treis parties devisoent:
A povre gent l'une donoent;
La seconde partie aveient
Li clerc qui al temple serveient;
La tierce a lor ués reteneient, fol. 66v
Dunt il e lor sergent viveient.
.XX. anz ensemble converserent,
N'orent enfanz, dolent en erent.
L'uns devers l'altre vergundot,
Ne saveient en quel pechot.
D'aveir enfant, quant il ce virent,
A Nostre Seignor cest vo firent:
Se fil u fille aveir poeient,
A son servise la metreient.*
A Damnedé unt ce promis,
Qu'a son servise sera mis,
E al temple servir donront
Le premier enfant qu'il avront.
Por desirier e por atente
D'aveir enfant est lor entente.
La feste deit om remenbrer
Que Jüeu suelent celebrer.
Ço ert la Dedicacion fol. 67r
Qui fu del temple Salamon.
A ceste feste s'asembloent,
Tuit a lor temple si portoent
Lor voz, lor ofrendes, lor dons,

How she was conceived and born,
How she was raised and married.
I am not relating and telling you this
Because you have not often heard it,
That Joachim was the name of her father
And her mother was called Anna.
Of noble people and a noble family
Was Joachim, from a city called
Nazareth in Galilee;
Anna was born in Sepphoris.*
They were united in marriage
And loved each other loyally and well.
Before God and before other people
They conducted themselves loyally
And lived a very good life,
Without wickedness and without folly.
Whatever the two of them earned,
All the gains they made,
They divided into three parts:
They gave one part to poor people,
The second part was given to
The clerics who served in the temple
And the third they retained for their own use;
On this they and their servants lived.
For twenty years they lived together
Without having any children and this distressed them.
Each one felt shame for the other,
And they did not know in what way they had sinned.
When they saw this, in order to have a child,
They made this promise to Our Lord:
If they could have a son or daughter,
They would place the child in his service.*
They promised this to the Lord God:
That the child would be placed in his service,
And to serve at the temple they would give
The first child they had.
Because they desired it so much and had waited so long,
They were determined to have a child.
One must remember the festival
That the Jews used to celebrate:
This was the Dedication,
Made in respect of the temple of Solomon.*
At that festival everyone gathered together
At the temple and brought
Their vows, their offerings and their gifts

Si faiseient lor oreisons.
Joachim a la feste ala,
O ses veisins s'acompaigna,
Por Deu preier e por orer
E por s'ofrende presenter.
Joachim vint o ses parenz,
Al temple Deu si entra enz.
Isacar evesques esteit,
Qui del temple la cure aveit.
Quant Joachim vit aprismier
E de l'ofrende apareillier,
Oiant toz par nom l'apela:
'N'aler avant', dist il, 'esta!
Par nos n'iert pas t'ofrende prise, fol. 67v
Ne deit estre sur alter mise.
N'iés pas dignes de Deu servir,
D'entrer al temple ne d'ofrir.
Va ta veie, fui d'entre nos!'
Joachin respont mut hontos:
'Sui je de si malvaise vie,
Sui je si pleins de felonie,
Qu'el temple Deu ne dei entrer
N'avuec cele altre gent orer?
Que ai forfait contre la lei
N'encontre Deu? dites le mei,
Ai mesfait en nulle maniere
Que m'ofrende seit mise ariere?
Qu'ai forfait vers mon creator
Dunt je deie perdre s'amor?'
Isacar li a respondu:
'Joachim, je n'ai pas veü
Tun mesfait ne ta malvaistié, fol. 68r
Ta felonie ne tun pechié,
Mais tu ses bien qu'il est escrit
En nostre lei que Deus a dit:
"Qui semence ne getera
En Israel maldiz sera".
Enfant apelë hom semence
E ço en est nostre sentence,
Que la leis dit que cil sera
Maleeiz qui n'engendrera.
N'as enfant ne n'as engendré,
Por ce nos est en veir mostré
T'ofrende ne seit receüe,
Ne desur alter retenue.

And made their prayers there.
Joachim went to the festival,
Accompanied by his neighbours,
To beseech God, to pray
And to present his offering.
Joachim came with his family
And entered God's temple.
Issachar was the bishop
Who had responsibility for the temple.*
When he saw Joachim approach
And prepare his offering,
In everyone's hearing he called to him by name:
'Do not go any farther', he said, 'stop!
Your offering will not be accepted by us;
It must not be placed on an altar.
You are not worthy to serve God,
To enter the temple or to make an offering.
Be on your way, get away from us!'
Joachim replied in great shame:
'Do I lead such an evil life?
Am I so full of wickedness
That I must not enter the temple of God,
Nor pray together with these other people?
What crime have I committed against the faith,
Or against God? Tell me.
Have I done wrong in any way,
So that my offering should be rejected?
What have I done wrong towards my Creator,
For which I should lose his love?'
Issachar replied to him:
'Joachim, I have not seen
Your crime or your wickedness,
Your evil or your sin.
But you well know that it is written
In our law that God has said:
"He who does not cast seed
In Israel will be cursed".
One calls a child seed,
And this is our opinion,
Because the law states that he will be
Cursed who does not beget.
You have no child and have not begotten;
For this reason it is clearly shown to us
That your offering should not be received,
Or retained on an altar.

Hom brahainz ne deit pas entrer
O cels qui pueent engendrer.
Quant tu enfant eü avras
Al temple vien, si ofreras.' fol. 68r, l. 18
Joachim respondi atant:
'Ce peise mei se n'ai enfant;
Ço est en Deu qu'enfant nen ai
E quant lui plaira j'en avrai;
Se brahainz sui, ce peise mei;
N'est pas par mon pechié, ce crei'.*
Joachim ne fist pas lonc conte, fol. 68v
Mais por le duel e por la honte
Que li evesques dit li ot,
Del temple eissi quant il ainz pot.
Ne s'en volt mie repairier
En sa maison n'a sa molier.
Por la gent de son parenté
Qui aveient o lui esté,
Cremeit s'il avuec els alast
Que alcuns d'els li reprochast
Ce que li evesques li dist
Qui s'ofrende li contredist.
Por solement cele achaison
Ne volt repairier a maison.
Ainz en ala o ses pastors,
O de ses bestes ot plusors.
Li pastor erent es montaignes,
Es granz deserz, es granz champaignes,
O les bestes que il gardoent. fol. 69r
De lonc tens a maison n'aloent,
Pain lor portot hom a mangier
E ce qui lor aveit mestier.
Loinz de citez, loinz de chastels.
Orent loges e travetels.
Iluec erent par les tormenz,
Par les ploies e par les venz.
En icel tens dont nos parlun
N'erent pas li pastor garçun,
Mais bacheler alques vaillant,
Bien fort, bien prot, bien conbatant,
Qui de larrons bien se gardassent,
E par matin ainz jor levassent.
Joachin es deserz ala
O ses pastors e mut plora.
En plorant fist ses oreisons

A barren man must not enter
With those who can beget.
When you have had a child,
Come to the temple and make your offering.'
Joachim then replied:
'It grieves me if I do not have a child;
It is in God's hands that I do not have a child,
And when it pleases him I shall have one.
If I am barren, this grieves me.
It is not because of any sin of mine, I believe.'
Joachim did not speak for long,
But because of his grief and his shame
At what the bishop had said to him,
He left the temple as soon as he could.
He did not want to go back
To his home or to his wife.
Because of the members of his family,
Who had been with him,
He was afraid that, if he went with them,
One of them would reproach him
With the words of the bishop,
Who had refused his offering.
For this reason alone,
He did not wish to go back home.
Instead he went off with his shepherds,
To where he had many of his beasts.
The shepherds were in the mountains,
In great deserts and in great fields,
With the beasts they were tending.
For a long time they did not return home;
Bread was brought for them to eat,
And whatever they needed.
Far from cities, far from castles,
They had their shelters and huts.
They were there during storms,
And during times of rain and wind.
At the time we are talking about
The shepherds were not young boys,
But young men of some valour,
Very strong, very brave and very good fighters,
Who could protect themselves well from thieves,
And they rose early, before daybreak.
Joachim went into the deserts
With his shepherds and wept profusely.
As he wept, he said his prayers,

E veilles e aflictions.
A jeüner a proposé fol. 69v
Tant que Deus l'ot revisité.
N'i aveit gaires jeüné
Quar gaires n'i aveit esté,
Quant uns angeles li aparut,
O grant clarté illuec s'estut.
La clartez qu'il vit entor sei
Mist Joachim en grant esfrei.
Grant paor ot de la lumiere,
N'osa aler avant n'ariere
Quant li angeles a lui parla,
En tel guise lui araisna:
'Joachim, n'aies pas paor,
Je sui angeles Nostre Seignor
Qui m'a ci enveié a tei,
Si te mandë e dit par mei,
Tes oreisons a entendues
E tes preieres receües,
Si a oï le reprovier fol. 70r
Que Isacar te dist l'altrier.
Se tu nen as enfant eü,
N'est par tun pechié avenu.
Deus a tot en sa poësté,
Qui de tot fait sa volenté.
Quant Deus ne laist home engendrer
Ne a sa feme enfant porter,
Puis unt en lor veillece enfant,
Ço est senefiance grant
Quar cil qui naist est de dreiture,
De Deu donez, non de luxure.
N'as tu oï dire sovent
Qu'Habraam vesqui longuement,
Ainz qu'il poüst enfant aveir,
Puis ot Isaac son bon eir,
En qui semence avront la gent
Beneïçon e salvement?
Jacob Rachel qui tant amot, fol. 70v
Tint longuement qu'enfant nen ot,
Puis fu de Rachel Josep nez,
Uns hom qui fu boneürez,
Samuël qui molt sainz hom fu,
E Sanson a la grant vertu,
De dous brahaignes femes furent
Qui ja enfanz aveir ne durent.

And performed his vigils and his penances.
He decided to fast
Until God had visited him.
He had scarcely begun his fasting,
For he had not been there for long,
When an angel appeared to him;
In a great light he stood there.
The light he saw all around him
Caused Joachim great fright.
He was terrified of the light
And did not dare go forwards or backwards.
When the angel spoke to him,
He addressed him in this way:
'Joachim, do not be afraid,
I am the angel of Our Lord,
Who has sent me here to you,
And he informs you and tells you through me,
That he has heard your entreaties
And received your prayers,
And he heard the reproach
Which Issachar made to you the other day.
If you have not had a child,
This did not happen through your sin.
God has everything in his power
And he does with everything according to his will.
When God does not let a man beget,
Nor his wife bear a child,
Then they have a child in their old age,
That is a great sign,
For the child who is born is rightfully born,
A gift from God, not one born out of lust.
Have you not often heard it said
That Abraham lived for a long time
Before he was able to have a child,
Then he had Isaac, his good heir,
In whose seed people would have
Blessing and salvation?
Jacob, who loved Rachel so much,
Remained a long while without a child,
Then from Rachel Joseph was born,
A man who was blessed.
Samuel, who was a very holy man,
And Samson with his great strength,
Came from two barren women
Who could not have children earlier.*

Enfant qui naissent de tel gent
Qui si tardent engendrement,
Il suelent estre plus vaillant,
Plus merveillos e plus sachant.
Crei les essamples, si m'entent:
Enfant avras prochainement,
Anna ta feme concevra
E une fille enfantera,
Que vos apelerez Marie.
De Saint Esprit ert replenie
Anceis que seit de mere nee. fol. 71r
A estros ert a Deu donee
E presentee a Damnedé,
Issi cum vos l'avez voé,
D'ordurë e de malvaistié
Se gardera e de pechié.
Virgene sera e si ert mere,
De li naistra nostre salvere,
Jesu qui al mont ert salu,
Qui toz tens ert e toz tens fu.
A cez paroles puez saveir,
Joachim, que je te di veir.
Quant en Jerusalem vendras,
Anna ta feme encontreras
A la porte oirë apellee
Por ce que ele fu doree.'
Quant li angeles ot ce conté
E Joachim l'ot escolté,
Ala s'en, mais primes li dist fol. 71v
Que sacrefice a Deu fesist.
Molt fu liez e Deu mercia.
Joachim si sacrefia
.X. agnels blans premierement,
.XII. torels, oeilles .c.
A Deu dona les .x. agnels,
E as proveires les torels.
E les oeilles totes .c.
Mist al pueple comunement.
Par les agnels que il ocist
Nos senefië Jesu Crist
Qui en la cruiz fu por nos mis
E fu por noz pechiez ocis.
Li doze tor senefiërent
Doze apostеles qui preechierent
E puis furent sacrefié,

Children who are born to such people,
Who thus delay the act of begetting,
Are accustomed to be more valiant,
More remarkable and more knowledgeable.
Pay heed to these examples and listen to me.
You will soon have a child;
Anna your wife will conceive
And give birth to a daughter,
Whom you will call Mary.
She will be filled with the Holy Ghost
Before her mother gives birth to her.
She will be given to God forthwith
And presented to the Lord God,
Just as you have promised.
From unclean and wicked acts
She will abstain, and from sin.
She will be a virgin and yet will be a mother,
From her our Saviour will be born,
Jesus who will bring salvation to the world,
Who will always be and always was.
From these words you can know,
Joachim, that I am telling you the truth.
When you come to Jerusalem,
You will meet Anna your wife
At the golden gate, called that
Because it was gilded.'
When the angel had said this
And Joachim had listened to him,
He departed, but first he told him
To make a sacrifice to God.
He was full of joy and gave thanks to God.
Joachim then sacrificed
Ten white sheep first of all,
Then twelve bulls and a hundred ewes.
He gave the ten lambs to God
And the bulls to the provosts.
All the hundred ewes
He gave to the people as a whole.
Through the lambs he killed
Is signified for us Jesus Christ,
Who for us was placed on the cross
And was killed for our sins.
The twelve bulls signified
The twelve apostles, who preached
And were then sacrificed,

Por amor Deu martirié.
Par cent berbiz qu'ot demandees fol. 72r
E al pueple en comun donees,
Ce, nos est avis, senefie
La celestial compaignie,
Quar cent cist nombres, ço savun,
Senefië perfectiun.
E cil qui sunt el ciel laissus
Sunt parfait, ne lor estuet plus,
Sanz enfertez sunt e sanz vice,
Sanz malvaistié e sanz malice.
Je ne di pas qu'il l'entendist
Quant il le sacrefice fist,
Mais Sainz Espriz li enseigna,
Qu'il deveit faire li mostra.
De Joachim vos avun dit,
Or dirun d'Anna un petit,
Qu'ele fist, coment se contint,
Quant sis sire a maison ne vint.
Anna fu dame molt preisiee, fol. 72v
Mut loee, molt enseigniee.
Le los d'enor e de bonté
Aveit de tot son veisiné.
Quant lu reprovier ot oï
Que l'om ot fait a son mari,
Dras de dolor e de plor prist,
Sa maison clost e grant duel fist,
Plora la nuit, plora le jor,
Tote iert sa vie en grant dolor,
Unques de joie ne li tint.
Quant li jorz de la feste vint
Que l'om se deveit esbaldir,
Mielz conreer e mielz vestir,
Dunc vint Uten, sa chamberiere,
Si l'araisna en tel maniere:
'Anna, dame, conforte tei.
Por quei ne prenz conrei de tei?
Deci a quant issi ploras? fol. 73r
Vest tel, dame, pren meillors dras.
Or te deis conreer plus bel
Qui es del lignage Israel.
Donc ne ses tu quel feste est ui?
Mut me tornë a grant enui
Que tote jor te vei plorer
Qui devreies joie mener.

Martyred for the love of God.
By the hundred sheep he had asked for
And given to the people as a whole,
This, we believe, signifies
The celestial company,
For this number one hundred, we know,
Signifies perfection.
And those who are up above in heaven
Are perfect, they need nothing more;
They are without infirmity and without fault,
Without wickedness and without sin.
I do not say that he intended this
When he made the sacrifice,
But the Holy Ghost instructed him
And showed him what he should do.
We have told you about Joachim,
So now we shall say a little about Anna,
What she did and how she conducted herself
When her husband failed to return home.
Anna was a lady of excellent reputation,
Highly praised and very well-educated.
Praise for her honour and goodness
Came from all her neighbours.
When she heard the reproach
That had been made against her husband,
She donned garments befitting sorrow and tears,
Closed up her house and was filled with grief.
She wept by night and wept by day;
Her whole life was passed in great sorrow
And she was completely devoid of joy.
When the day of the festival came,
On which one should display joy,
Adorn oneself better and dress better,
Uten, her chambermaid, came
And spoke to her in this way:
'Anna, my lady, be comforted.
Why are you not taking care of yourself?
How long are you going to weep like this?
Get dressed, my lady, put on better clothes.
Now you must adorn yourself more beautifully,
You who are of the lineage of Israel.
Do you not know what festival it is today?
It is a cause of great distress for me
To see you weeping all day long,
When you should be filled with joy.

Anna, dame, tu fais merveilles.
Por quei, cheles, ne t'apareilles?
Ja est feste Nostre Seignor
Que l'om deit joie aveir cest jor.'
Anna encontre respondi:
'Uten, tais tei, fui tei d'ici.
Se mais m'en faiseies parole
Tenir t'en porreies por fole.
O est ma joie, o est mis sire?
Quant je nel sai, deis me tu dire
Que joie face et liee seie? fol. 73v
Ce n'iert jamais tant que jel veie.'
Uten fu alques endeigniee,
Alques enflee e corociee.
En travers respondi: 'Por quei
Tornes, dame, t'ire sor mei?
Quels colpes ai se iés brahaigne?
Dunc ne vels tu que l'on te plaigne?'
Dolente fu e triste Anna
De ce qu'Uten li reprova.
Tote iree d'iluec torna,
En son vergier sole en entra,
Que sole iluec plorer poüst,
Ne que conforz riens ne li fust.
Quant el vergier fu sole entree
E a plorer fu atornee,
Mains e oilz vers le ciel torna,
Deu reclama sil depreia:
'Deus', dist ele, 'oies m'oreison, fol. 74r
Si me done beneïçon,
Oies mei si cum tu oïs
Sarram que tu beneesquis,
Puis li donas un fil vaillant,
Isaac qu'ot desiré tant.'
Anna fina ceste preiere,
Puis se replainst en tel maniere:
'Lasse, quels pere m'engendra,
Lasse, quel mere me porta,
Dunt ai je tel maleïçon
Que del temple me chace l'on
Por quei fui jo unques criëe,
E por quei fui brahaigne nee?'
Si cum Anne se dementot
E mut amerement plorot,
Devant li vint li angeles Dé

Anna, my lady, you are acting strangely.
Come now, why are you not getting ready?
Today is the festival of Our Lord,
So one should be joyful this day.'
Anna replied to her:
'Uten, be quiet, get out of here.
If you carried on talking to me about this,
I could regard you as a fool.
Where is my joy, where is my husband?
Since I don't know this, must you tell me
To be joyful and happy?
This I shall never be until I see him.'
Uten was somewhat offended at this,
Somewhat indignant and angry.
She replied in her turn: 'Why
Do you turn you wrath on me, my lady?
What fault is it of mine if you are barren?
So do you not want to be pitied?'
Anna was sorrowful and sad
At Uten's reproach to her.
Completely distraught, she turned away
And went alone into her garden,
So that she could weep there alone,
Without anything to comfort her.
When she entered garden alone
And started to weep,
She turned her hands and eyes towards heaven,
Calling on God and praying to him:
'O God', she said, 'hear my prayer
And give me your blessing.
Hear me just as you heard
Sarah, whom you blessed;
Then you gave her a worthy son,
Isaac, whom she had desired so much.'*
Anna finished this prayer,
Then began to lament again in this way:
'Alas, what father begot me,
Alas, what mother bore me,
From which there is such a curse on me
That I am driven from the temple.
Why was I ever created,
And why was I born barren?'
As Anna lamented
And wept most bitterly,
There came before her the angel of God

Qui ot a Joachim parlé.
'Anna', dist il, 'Deus t'a oïe, fol. 74v
Enfant avras, n'i faldras mie.'
Anna, quant l'ot, mot s'esjoï.
Mult humlement li respondi:
'Sache Deus que que jo avrai,
Fil u fille je li dunrai,
A lui servir a sun plaisir.
Nule chose plus ne desir'.
'Anna', dist il, 'seüre seies,
N'aies paor de rien que veies,
Angeles Deu sui, ne t'esmaier.
Je te sui ci venuz nuncier
Les almosnes que as donees
Sunt el ciel a Deu presentees.
Veü a tes afflictions,
Tes preieres, tes oreisons.
Aies joie si t'esleece,
Ne t'esmaier por ta veillece.
.L.xxx. anz vesqui Sarra, fol. 75r
Puis conçut ele e enpreigna.
Brahaigne fu longes Rachel,
Fille Labam, feme Israel.
Puis enpreigna e si conçut
Josep, un fil qui molt valut.
Puis fu d'Egipte reis e sire
E si en osta la famire.
Fille avras de grant renomee
Qui sera Marie apelee,
Sor totes femes honoree,
Sor tote gent boneüree.
De Saint Esprit ert replenie.
En enfance ert a vos norrie,
Al temple ert a .iij. anz portee,
Tresqu'a .xiiij. anz ert gardee.
Iluec servira nuit e jor
En oreisons son creator.
N'avra l'om de li sospeçon fol. 75v
De negune male achaison.
Unques ne fu tant bone nee,
Tant beneeite, tant amee.
Ja ne sera d'ome tochiee,
Virgene ert e si avra ligniee.
Li salvere de li naistra,
Fille son pere enfantera.

Who had spoken to Joachim.
'Anna', he said, 'God has heard you;
You will have a child, without fail.'
When she heard this, Anna was filled with joy;
She replied to him most humbly:
'May God know that, whatever I have,
Son or daughter, I shall give to him,
To serve him at his pleasure.
I desire nothing more'.
'Anna', he said, 'rest assured,
Do not be afraid of anything you may see.
I am the angel of God, do not be dismayed,
I have come here to announce to you
That the alms you have given
Have been presented to God in heaven.
He has seen your penance,
Your prayers, your entreaties.
May you have joy and be happy;
Do not worry that you are old.
Sarah lived for eighty years,
Then she conceived and became pregnant.
Rachel was barren for a long time,
The daughter of Laban, wife of Israel.
Then she became pregnant and conceived
Joseph, who was a very worthy son.
Later he was king and lord of Egypt
And he rid them of their famine.*
You will have a daughter of great renown,
Who will be called Mary,
Honoured above all women,
Blessed above all people.
She will be filled with the Holy Ghost.
In her childhood she will be raised by you;
At the age of three she will be taken to the temple
And looked after until the age of fourteen.
There day and night she will serve
Her Creator in prayer.
No one will suspect her
Of any wicked purpose.
Never was such a good woman born,
One so blessed or so much loved.
She will never be touched by a man;
She will be a virgin and have progeny.
The Saviour will be born of her;
The daughter will give birth to her father.

Quant en Jerusalem vendras
Tun seignor que desiré as
A l'oire porte encontreras,
E par içо saveir porras,
Quant ce te sera avenu,
De tun seignor dunc creras tu
Que de tot t'ai dit verité.'
Quant li angeles ot ce conté
Ala s'en. Es vos la venuz
.ii. homes de blans dras vestuz,
Qui unt Anna si aparlee: fol. 76r
'Anna, feme boneüree,
Joiose e liee te puez faire,
Joachin tis amis repaire'.
Anna ne s'est pas demoree,
En Jerusalem est alee.
Sun seignor issi encontra,
Cum li angeles li anunça.
As portes oires s'encontrerent,
Molt dolcement se saluerent.
A l'encontrer grant joie firent,
A Damnedé grace rendirent,
Al temple firent oreison,
Puis s'en alerent a maison.
Segurement ont atendu
Ce que par l'angele anuncié fu.
Anna conçut e enpreigna,
Une fille al terme enfanta.
Marie cest nom li ont mis fol. 76v
Que li angeles lor ot apris.
Treis anz en reont la nurrirent,
Apres al temple si l'ofrirent.
Al temple aveit .xv. degrez,
En ordre enhalçant compassez,
Bien halz les ot l'om faiz e granz.
La meschinete de .iij. anz
Al premier de desoz s'est mise,
De l'un a l'altre amont s'est prise.
Endementres qu'il esgardoent
E lor ofrendre apareiloent,
Joachim e sa feme Anna,
Toz les .xv. degrez monta,
Sanz conduit e sanz compaignie,
Sanz meneor e sanz aïe.
Altresi est amont alee

When you come to Jerusalem,
At the golden gate you will meet
Your husband, whom you have desired,
And through this you will be fully informed;
When this comes about,
You will then realise that I have told you
The whole truth about your husband.'
When the angel had said this to her,
He left and, lo, there arrived
Two men clad in white garments,*
Who addressed Anna with these words:
'Anna, fortunate woman,
You can be happy and joyful,
Joachim, your beloved, is coming home'.
Anna did not delay;
She went to Jerusalem.
In this way she met her husband,
Just as the angel had announced it to her.
They met at the golden gates
And greeted each other very tenderly.
When they met, they rejoiced greatly,
Gave thanks to the Lord God
And prayed in the temple;
Then they went home.
They waited confidently
For what had been announced by the angel.
Anna conceived and became pregnant;
When her time came, she gave birth to a daughter.
They gave her the name Mary,
According to the angel's instruction.
They kept her with them for a full three years;
Afterwards they offered her to the temple.
At the temple there were fifteen steps,
Arranged in ascending order.
They had been made very steep and large.
The little three-year-old girl,
Stood on the first one at the bottom
And began to climb up from one to the other.
While Joachim and his wife Anna
Were attending to
And preparing their offering,
She climbed up all fifteen steps,
Without any guidance or companion,
Without being led or helped.
She went up just as if

Come se fust feme formee.
Iluec volt Damnedés mostrer fol. 77r
Qu'il la volt creistre e halt lever,
De vertu en vertu monter
E de bien en bien amender.
Quant si parent se regarderent,
Sor les degrez halt la troverent.
A merveilles cest monter tindrent,
Quant orent fait, apres li vindrent.
La virgene ont al temple donee,
Issi cum il l'orent voee.
Quant orent fait lor sacrefise
E la virgene o les altres mise
Qui al temple erent por servir
E por aprendre e por norrir,
A Damnedé la comanderent,
Laissierent la si s'en alerent.
Al temple Deu remest Marie,
O altres virgenes fu norrie.
Issi cum Marie cresseit, fol. 77v
Plus amendot e plus saveit,
L'enor de li e la bonté,
Ot tut sun aage passé,
Quar mieldrë ere e plus sage
Que nule altre de sun aage.
Angele sovent a li parloent
Qui por garder la visitoent.
Cil qui la virgene conoisseient
A merveilles Dé le teneient;
Quar tant ert juevene e tant vaillant
E tant saintisme e tant sachant,
Sa vertu, sa bonté, son los,
Ne puis escrire ne nen os.
Que sereit cil qui tant direit
De sa bonté, que plus n'en seit,
Sun bien, son sens, sa saintité,
Sa merveillose chasteé.*
Puet hom iluec alques prover fol. 78r
Que Deus se volt en li umbrer,
Por ce que Deus char en li prist
E que de li son ostel fist,
Puet hom saveir en verité
Que la dame ert de grant bonté.
Ce truevë hom en escriture
Que Deus Nostre Sire n'a cure

She were a fully grown woman.
Thus the Lord God wanted to show
That he wished to raise her and lift her up high,
Make her go from strength to strength
And get better and better.
When her parents looked round,
They found her high up on the stairs.
They were amazed by her climb;
When they had finished, they came after.
They gave the virgin to the temple,
Just as they had promised.
When they had made their sacrifice
And placed the virgin with the others,
Who were in the temple to serve,
To learn and to be raised,
They entrusted her to the Lord God,
Left her there and departed.
Mary remained in God's temple;
She was brought up with the other virgins.
As Mary was growing,
She improved more and became more learned;
In honour and goodness
She exceeded those of her age,
For she was better and wiser
Than any other girl of her age.
She was often spoken to by angels
Who visited her to watch over her.
Those who knew the virgin
Regarded her as one of God's miracles,
For she was so young and so worthy,
And so holy and so knowledgeable;
Her strength, her goodness and her reputation
I could not, and dare not, describe.
What would the man be who would say so much
About her goodness, because he knows of no greater,
And about her virtue, her sense, her holiness
And her remarkable chastity?*
In this one can prove in some measure
That in her God wished to produce a reflection of himself,
Because God took on flesh in her
And made her his dwelling-place,
So one can know in truth
That the lady was of great goodness.
This one finds in Scripture,
That God, Our Lord, has no wish

D'entrer en malvaise maison
Se primes n'a confection.
Dunc fu la virgene munde e pure,
E sanz pechié e sanz ordure,
En qui li reis de maiesté
Prendre deigna humanité.
La virgene al temple conversa,
De Deu servir pas ne cessa.
Tote s'entente e sun pensé
Aveit a Deu servir torné.
Tant fu norrie e tant creüe fol. 78v
Que a .xiiij. anz fu venue.
Dunc a li prestre comandé
Que les virgenes de cest aé
Seient a lor parenz livrees,
Desore en avant mariëes.
Totes les plusors qui l'oïrent
Molt volentiers son comant firent,
Mais Marie de ce n'ot cure,
Toz tens volt estre virgene e pure.
Quant hom a parole la mist:
'Ne puet estre', Marie dist,
'Qu'a home seie mariëe.
Je sui a Damnedé donee,
Jo ai de lui fait mun ami,
Ne puis aveir altre mari.
Je li ai promis e voé
A gardner ma virginité;*
Voé li ai si li tendrai. fol. 79r
Ja mun vo ne trespasserai.
E anceis que je fusse nee,
Fui jo a mon seignor donee.
Tenir me voil a son servise,
Por ce fui jo al temple mise.'
Li evesques ne sot que faire,
Ne l'osot de son vo retraire,
Quar comandé aveit esté:
'Voëz e si rendez a Dé'.
De l'altre part alques dotot,
Costume metre n'i osot
Dunt li parent se coroçassent
Que lor filles ne mariassent,
Si cum il ert acostumé
E establi e comandé
Por le pueple multiplier,

To enter a house of wickedness,
Unless arrangements had first been made.
So the virgin was pure and unsullied
And without sin and immorality,
In whom the King of Majesty
Deigned to assume human form.
The virgin lived in the temple
And never stopped serving God.
All her purpose and thoughts
Were turned to the service of God.
She was raised and grew
Until she reached the age of fourteen.
At that time the priest commanded
That virgins of that age
Should be handed over to their parents
And from that time married off.
Many of them who heard this
Very willingly did his bidding,
But Mary had no desire for this;
She wanted to be a virgin and remain pure for all time.
When people spoke to her about this:
'It cannot be', replied Mary,
'That I could be married to a man.
I have been given to the Lord God;
I have made him my beloved
And cannot have any other husband.
I have promised and vowed to him
To preserve my virginity.
I have made this vow to him and shall keep it;
Never shall I transgress my vow.
Before I was born,
I was given to my Lord.
I intend to remain in his service;
For this reason I was placed in the temple.'
The bishop did not know what to do;
He did not dare make her go against her vow,
For it had been commanded:
'Make your vow and surrender yourself to God'.
On the other hand, he was somewhat fearful;
He did not dare create a custom in this way,
At which the parents would become angry,
Whereby their daughters were not marrying,
As had been customary,
And established and commanded,
In order to multiply mankind,

Por faire creistre e essalcier.
Por conseil prendre de cel plait fol. 79v
A li evesques mander fait
Les sages homes, les senez,
E des chastels e des citez
Al temple furent asemblé
Le jor d'une solemnité.
Dunc lor a l'om dit e mostré
De la chose la verité,
De la virgene qui s'est voee,
Qui ne puet estre mariëe
S'ele son vo nen enfraigneit
Que ele enfraigndre ne devreit.
De ce lor estut conseil prendre
E molt parfundement entendre,
Coment la puet hom mariër
Si que son vo puisse garder;
Quar puisque hom a sun vo fait
Ne fait pas bien qui s'en retrait.
A nul sens guerpir ne deit hon fol. 80r
Ce que hom voe par raison.
N'i ot home qui tant seüst
Qui conseilier les en poüst,
Fors Deu preier e reclamer,
Qui crea ciel e terre e mer,
Que il lor face demostrance
O alcune senefiance
Que de ceste virgene fereient,
Se de son vo la retraireient.
Puis se mistrent a oreisons
E firent granz aflictions,
E quant il lor preiere firent,
Une voiz desur els oïrent
Qui dist: 'Gardez la profetie
Que pieça vos dist Ysaïe.
Ysaïe pieça vos dist
Sa profetie, vos promist:
De la raïz Jessé istra fol. 80v
Une verge qui florira.
La verge flor e fruit avra,
Sainz Espriz s'i reposera.'
Por la voiz qui lor anunça
Que une verge florira
Qui ert de la raïz Jessé
Unt li prodome porpensé

To increase and enhance it.
To take advice on this matter
The bishop summoned
The wise men and the elders,
And from both the castles and cities
They were assembled in the temple
On the day of a high festival.
Then the truth of this matter
Was recounted and explained to them,
About the virgin who had made her vow
And could not be married
Without breaking her vow,
Which she ought not to break.
This was the matter they must discuss
And pay heed to most profoundly,
How it was possible for her to be married
So that she could keep her vow.
For once someone has made his vow
It would not be right to go against it.
In no way should one abandon
What one has promised rightly.
There was no one with enough knowledge
To be able to advise them on this matter,
Except that they should pray to and call upon God,
Who created sky, earth and sea,
That he should demonstrate to them
By means of some sign
What they should do with this virgin,
Whether they should make her give up her vow.
Then they began their prayers
And did great penance,
And when they had finished their prayer,
They heard a voice above them,
Saying: 'Look to the prophecy
That Isaiah made to you long ago.
Long ago Isaiah told you
His prophecy and promised you this:
From the root of Jesse will issue
A rod that will sprout.
The rod will bear flowers and fruit
And the Holy Ghost will repose within it.'*
Through the voice, which announced to them
That a rod would sprout
That would be from the root of Jesse,
The worthy men decided

Que toz cels ferunt asembler
E en lor mains verges porter
Qui del lin Davit sunt venu,
Quar Jessé pere Davit fu,
E cil a feme avra Marie
En qui main la verge ert florie.
Li evesques a fait mander
E a un jor fait asembler
Toz cels qui esposes n'aveient
Qui del Davit lignage esteient.
Comandé fu que tuit venissent fol. 81r
E en lor mains verges tenissent.
En qui la verge florireit
A espose la virgene avreit.
Quant vint le jor de l'asemblee
Ne remest hom en la contree
Qui a cest afaire ne fust,
Se tels ne fu qui feme eüst.
Josep vint en Jerusalem,
Uns hom qui fu de Bethleem.
Vielz hom fu, sa feme esteit morte.
O els altres sa verge porte.
Alques vielz ert, ja ne quesist
Que tel feme li avenist.
Graignors filz e ainz nez aveit
Que la sainte Virgene n'esteit.
Se il trestorner l'en poüst,
Ja ne queïst que il l'eüst,
Mais nel puet mie trestorner, fol. 81v
O ses veisins l'estuet aler.
E quant il en la presse entra,
La verge que il tint muça.
Li evesques partot garda,
Nule des verges n'i trova
Qui flor portast ne qui florist.
Deu depreia e Deus li dist:
'Cil a sa verge trestornee
A qui la virgene ert mariëe'.
Aperceüz fu e repris
Josep si l'a hom avant mis.
Sa verge leva si flori
E borjona e reverdi.
Une columbe de ciel vint
Sor la verge que Josep tint.
Dunc li fu Marie donee,

That they would gather together all those,
And place rods in their hands,
Who had come from the line of David,
For Jesse was David's father,*
And the man would have Mary as his wife
In whose hand the rod sprouted.
The bishop summoned,
And on one day gathered together,
All those who had no wives
Who were from the lineage of David.
They were all ordered to come
And hold rods in their hands.
The man whose rod sprouted
Would have the virgin as his wife.
When the day came for them to gather,
No one in that region failed
To be present at this event,
And there was no one there who had a wife.
Joseph came from Jerusalem,
A man who was from Bethlehem.
He was an old man whose his wife was dead,
And he brought his rod along with the others.
He was well on in years and never sought
To have such a wife;
He had sons, born previously,
Who were older than the virgin.
If he could have avoided it,
He would never have sought to have her;
But he could not avoid it
And had to go along with his neighbours.
When he entered the throng,
He kept the rod he was carrying out of sight.
The bishop looked all round
And could not find any rod
That bore a flower or sprouted.
He prayed to God and God said to him:
'The man has concealed his rod
To whom the virgin will be married'.
Joseph was noticed and admonished,
And he was brought forward.
He raised his rod and it sprouted,
Came into bud and blossomed.
A dove descended from heaven
On to the rod that Joseph held.
Then Mary was given to him

E segun la lei esposee.
O li volsist o ne deignast, fol. 82r
O bel li fust o li pesast,
Li estuet la dame esposer,
Ne l'osa mie refuser.
Quant issi fu cist plaiz finez
En Bethleem s'en est alez,
A sa maison e a sa gent,
Faire son apareillement.
De cez noces qu'il deveit faire
Ne s'en poeit mie retraire.
La dame o sa gent est alee,
A Nasaret en Galilee.
Set puceles o sei mena
Que li evesques li livra
Qui erent de sun parenté
E totes set de sun aé.
Quant Marie a Nasaret fu,
Ez vos un angele a li venu,
Sainz Gabriël o grant clarté, fol. 82v
Qui cest salu li a porté,
Ce li dist: 'Deus te salt, Marie
De la Deu grace replenie,
Deus Nostre Sire avuec tei seit,
E li tuens fruiz seit beneeit.
Sor totes femes es preisiee
E beneeite e essalciee.'
La virgene n'est pas conmeüe
De la clarté qu'ele a veüe
Asez sovent aveit veüz
Angeles issi a li venuz.
Mais de ce sol se merveilla
Qu'en tel guise la salua.
Merveilla sei de cel salu
Qui onques mais diz ne li fu.
Endementres qu'ele pensot
Que cil saluz senefiot,
Sun corage, sun pensé vit fol. 83r
Sainz Gabriël, si li a dit:
'Ne seies mie espoentee,
Ne de ce que t'ai dit troblee.
N'aies pas paor ne dotance,
En Deu aies bone esperance.
Ne perdras rien qu'aies voé,
Gardee ert ta virginité.

And married to him in accordance with the law.
Whether he liked it or would not have agreed to it,
Whether it pleased him or upset him,
He had to marry the lady
And did not dare refuse to do so.
When this matter was thus concluded,
He returned to Bethlehem,
To his home and his people,
In order to make his arrangements.
From this marriage he was to undertake
He was not able to escape.
The lady with her people went
To Nazareth in Galilee.
She took seven maidens with her,
Handed over to her by the bishop,
Who were from her family,
And all seven were of her age.
When Mary was in Nazareth,
Lo, an angel came to her,
St Gabriel, in a great light,
Who brought her this greeting
And said to her: 'May God be your salvation, Mary,
You who are filled with God's grace,
May Our Lord God be with you,
And your fruit be blessed.
Above all women you are prized,
Blessed and exalted.'
The virgin was not disturbed
By the light she saw;
She had very often seen
Angels coming like this.
But just one thing amazed her,
That he greeted her in this way.
She marvelled at this greeting,
Which had never before been made to her.
While she was wondering
What this greeting signified,
Her innermost feelings and thoughts were perceived by
St Gabriel, who said to her:
'Do not be afraid,
Or troubled by what I have said to you.
Have no fear or doubt,
Put all your hopes in God.
You will not lose anything you have vowed;
Your virginity will be preserved.

Tu concevras, un fil avras,
E mere e virgene enfanteras.
Mere, virgene pure, saintisme,
Tis fiz sera fiz a l'altisme,
De sa bonté puet hom molt dire.
Deus, reis des reis, des seignors sire,
Reis ert e sanz fin regnera,
Sa poësté toz tens durra.'
La virgene n'ot mie dotance
Que Deus nen ait de tot poissance,
Mais la maniere volt saveir fol. 83v
Corn virgene puisse enfant aveir.
'Coment', dist ele, 'concevrai
E en quel guise enfanterai
Qui a home nen ai parlé,*
E garder voil ma chasteé?
Feme, coment enfantera
Qui a home parlé nen a?
Virginité m'estuet garder,
Coment puis virgene enfant porter?
Coment, sainz hom, enfanter dei
Quant hom ne deit tochier a mei?
Quel costume est que enfant ait
Feme qui a home ne vait?'
Sainz Gabriël li respondi:
'Sainte Virgene, n'est pas issi.
Saint Espriz en tei descendra,
La vertu Deu en tel mandra,
E ice qui de tei istra, fol. 84r
Por ce que sanz pechié naistra,
Sanz pechié conceüz e nez,
Fiz Damnedé ert apelez.
Virgene es e virgene concevras,
E issi virgene enfanteras.
E virgene apres e virgene avant,
E virgene alaiteras enfant.
Ne seies pas a creire lente,
Veiz Elisabet ta parente
Qui longues a brahaigne esté
E enfant a tant desiré,
Conceü a de son seignor
Un fil qui ert de grant valor.'
En ce que Nostre Dame oï
De l'angele qui li dist issi,
Fu elle sempres enpreigniee

You will conceive and have a son,
And you will give birth as a mother and a virgin.
Mother, pure virgin, most holy,
Your son will be son of the Most High;
Of his goodness one can say much.
God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords,
He will be a king and reign forever;
His power will be without end.'
The virgin had no doubt
That God had power over everything,
But she wanted to know in what way
A virgin could have a child.
'How', she said, 'can I conceive
And in what way give birth,
I who have never had contact with a man*
And wish to preserve my virginity?
How can a woman bear a child
Who has not had contact with a man?
I must preserve my virginity;
How can I as a virgin bear a child?
How, O holy one, must I give birth
When no man must touch me?
What custom is it that a woman
Has a child who does not go with a man?'
St Gabriel replied to her:
'Holy virgin, it is not like that.
The Holy Ghost will descend into you;
It will send God's power into you,
And the one who comes forth from you,
Because he will be born without sin,
Conceived and born without sin,
Will be called the son of the Lord God.
You are a virgin and as a virgin you will conceive,
And thus as a virgin you will give birth.
Both virgin afterwards and virgin beforehand,
And as a virgin you will suckle your child.
Do not be reluctant to believe;
Consider Elizabeth, your relative,
Who was barren for a long time
And desired a child so much;
She has conceived by her husband
A child who will be of great worth.'
Just as Our Lady had heard
From the angel, who spoke to her in this way,
She was immediately impregnated

De la celestial ligniee,
Si dist a l'angele o grant dolçor: fol. 84v
'Ancele sui Nostre Seignor,
Issi m'aviegne com tu diz.
Que li salvere seit mes flz.'
Qui tot a fait, tot veit, tot ot,
Qui mer, qui terre, qui ciel clot,
Qui est defors, qui est dedenz,
Qui fait les ploies e les venz,
Qui toz tens ert e toz tens fu,
Sainz a la virgene conceü.
Saches que por veir puet hom dire:
Sers devint cil qui esteit sire,
La fille est devenue mere
E devenuz est fiz li pere.
Deus devint hom, qu'il pot morir
Por les armes de nos garir.
Deus devint hom mortels por nos,
Si n'iert pas de nos besoignos,
Mais Deus por noz besoinz le fist, fol. 85r
Que de la mort nos reëncist.
De la mort, di je, pardurable
E de la baillie al deable.
De jor en jor li tens passa,
Li fiz crut, la mere engrossa.
Un jor s'esmut de Nasareth
Por aler a Elisabeth
Qui esteit feme Zaquarie
E cosine sainte Marie.
Zaquariës uns prestre esteit,
En la cité Judé maneit.
Sa feme fu brahaigne avant,
Mais or est preinz de vif enfant.
De cele Elisabet nasqui
Johanz que Deus beneesqui,
Que Deus ama tant e loa
Qu'el flum Jordain le batisa.
Les .ii. dames chargié aveient, fol. 85v
Chascune un fil porter deveient.
Fiz porterent, mais molt divers,
Li uns ert sire, l'altre sers;
Li uns faitre, l'altre faiture;
Li uns criërre, l'uns creature;
Li uns ert pere, l'altre fiz;
E li uns granz, l'altre petiz.

With the celestial progeny,
And she said to the angel with great tenderness:
'I am the handmaiden of Our Lord;
Let things happen to me as you say.
Let my son be the Saviour.'
He who has made everything, sees everything, hears everything,
Who encloses sea, earth and sky,
Who is outside, who is inside,
Who makes the rain and the winds,
Who will always be and always was,
Holy and conceived in the virgin.
Know that one can say in truth:
He who was a lord became a servant;
The daughter became mother
And the father became the son.
God became man, because he could die
In order to save our souls.
God became a mortal man for us,
Yet he had no need of us,
But God did this for our needs,
For he saved us from death,
From death everlasting, I tell you,
And from the clutches of the Devil.
From day to day time passed;
The son grew, the mother became big.
One day she set off from Nazareth
To go to Elizabeth,
Who was the wife of Zechariah
And cousin of the Virgin Mary.*
Zechariah was a priest;
He lived in the city of Judaea.
His wife had been barren earlier,
But now she was pregnant with a living child.
From this Elizabeth was born
John, whom God blessed,
Whom God loved and praised so much
That he baptized him in the river Jordan.
The two ladies were with child;
Each of them was to bear a son.
They bore sons, but very different,
One was a lord, the other a servant,
One a maker, the other made,
One a creator, the other created,
One was a father, the other a son,
And one was great and the other lowly.

Les .ii. dames se saluerent,
Que cosines d'un lignage erent.
Sainte Marie avant parla
Et Elisabet salua.
Quant ele sun salu oï,
Sis fiz el ventre s'esjoï,
D'amor e de joie s'esmut,
Sun seignor qui veneit conut.
Cil qui esteit encore a naistre
Conut sun seignor e sun maistre,
Deciples maistre, sers seignor, fol. 86r
Creature, sun creator.
Dunc fu la feme Zaquarie
De la Deu grace replenie
Si dist itant par profecie:
'Beneeite seies, Marie,
E beneeiz li fruiz de tei,
Quant tu ça es venue a mei,
La sainte mere mun seignor,
Dedenz mun ventre por s'amor
Li enfes petiz s'esjoï,
Desque je tun salu oï.
Boneüree es qui creïs
Les paroles que tu oïs.
Totes les choses t'avendrunt
Que de par Deu dites te sunt.'
Les .ii. dames s'entr'enorerent
E de ce que lor plot parlerent.
Lor henors e lor parlement fol. 86v
Firent alques diversement;
L'une ert dame, juevene pucele,
L'altre vieille, si ert ancele.
Quant Nostre Dame ot la esté
E de ce que lor plot parlé,
A Nasereth revint ariere
A sa gent qui molt l'aveit chiere.
Tant fu del tens avant alé
Que ne pot mais estre celé
Que la virgene n'ait conceü,
Alques l'ot hom aperceü.
Puis que Joseph la virgene ot prise,
Prise, di jo, en itel guise
Qu'otreiee fu e livree,
Fu il .iii. meis en sa contree.
Si a sa chose apareilliee

The two ladies greeted each other,
Because they were cousins from one lineage.
The Virgin Mary spoke first
And greeted Elizabeth.
When she heard her greeting,
Her son rejoiced in the womb;
He stirred out of love and joy.
He recognised his lord, who was coming.
The one who was still to be born
Recognised his lord and his master,
The disciple the master, the servant the lord,
The created his creator.
Then was the wife of Zechariah
Filled with the grace of God,
And she said by way of prophecy:
'May you be blessed, Mary,
And the fruit of you be blessed;
When you came to me here,
The holy mother of my lord,
Within my womb for love of him
The little child rejoiced,
As soon as I heard your greeting.
You are blessed who believed
The words that you heard.
All those things will come to pass
That you have been told about in God's name.'
The two ladies honoured each other
And talked of whatever took their fancy.
They showed honour to each other and discussed
Matters with each other in different ways.
One was a lady, a young girl,
The other old, a handmaiden.
When Our Lady had spent some time there
And they had spoken of whatever they wished,
She went back to Nazareth,
To her people who held her very dear.
Time then passed,
Until it could no longer be concealed
That the virgin had conceived;
It became somewhat obvious.
Since Joseph had taken the virgin,
Taken, I say, in such a way
That she was offered and handed over to him,
He had been in his own region for three months.
For the event he had prepared

E sa maison e sa maisniee.
Apres quant li .iiii. meis entra fol. 87r
A Nasereth Joseph ala.
Quant il a la dame aprisma
E il de plus pres li parla,
Cum costume ert a itel gent
De parler plus priveement,
Sempres ot bien aperceü
Que Nostre Dame grosse fu.
Quant il le sot certainement,
Ne fu mie sanz maltalent.
E qui fust cil cui ne pesast
Se sa feme grosse trovast
Cui il unques n'eüst tochiee
Ne adesee ne bailliee?
Trespensez fu e duel ot grant,
Mais ne volt faire nul semblant.
Ne fist semblant de sun pensé,
Bien en cela sa volenté.
Començа sei a porpenser, fol. 87v
Coment s'en porreit delivrer
E quel porpens en porreit prendre.
Ne la voleit as parenz rendre,
Ne metre sor li sospeçon
Qu'ele ait fait fornicacion.
Porpensa sei qu'il s'en fuireit,
Ocultement la guerpireit.
Del fuïr a grant volenté.
La nuit qu'il ert en tel pensé
Enz en sun lit la u il jut,
Li angeles Dé li aparut.
Si que Josep bien l'entendi:
'Josep', dist il, 'fili Davi,
Ne doter pas, ne t'esmaier
Marie a prendre, ta molier.
Ne creire pas que ele ait fait
Vilenie ne malvais plait.
Cil qui en li est conceüz, fol. 88r
Dont tu es issi comeüz,
E qui t'a fait si grant paor,
Ço est uevre Nostre Seignor.
Joseph, ce qui de li naistra
Fiz Dé, Jesus, nomez sera.
Jesus, cist nons, ço est salvere,
A sa mere ert e fiz e pere.

Both his house and his household.
After the beginning of the fourth month,
Joseph went to Nazareth.
When he approached the lady
And was in closer contact with her,
As the custom was for such people
To come together in greater privacy,
He noticed at once
That Our Lady was pregnant.
When he knew this for certain,
He was not without anger.
Who could possibly fail to be upset
If he found his wife pregnant,
When he had never touched her,
Or approached her or taken possession of her?
He was very worried and grief-stricken,
But did not want to give any sign of this.
He gave no sign of what he was thinking
And concealed his wishes in this respect.
He began to think about
How he could get rid of her
And what plan he could devise for this.
He did not want to give her back to her parents,
Or cause suspicion to fall on her
That she had committed adultery.
He made up his mind to take flight
And abandon her in secret.
He had a great desire to flee.
That night, when he was having such thoughts,
In his bed where he was lying,
The angel of God appeared before him,
In such a way that Joseph heard him clearly:
'Joseph', he said, 'son of David,
Do not be afraid, and do not be concerned about
Taking Mary, your wife;
Do not think that she has committed
A wicked act or an evil deed.
He who is conceived in her,
Whereby you are so agitated,
And which has caused you so much fear,
This is Our Lord's work.
Joseph, the one who will be born of her
Will have the name Jesus, the son of God.
Jesus, this name means savior;
He will be both son and father to his mother.

Jesus sun pueple salvera
E de pechié le gardera.'
Puis nen a pas Joseph doté
Quant li angeles ot si parlé.
La virgene prist si la garda,
Chastement o li conversa.
Del servir e del honorer,
Del conreer e del garder,
Cum il mielz pot, nen altrement,
O li estut molt chastement.
Tant fu del tens avant alé fol. 88v
Que pres de .viiij. meis l'ot porté.
Quant Joseph sun eire apresta,
En Bethleem l'en amena.
Idunc fu nez li nostre sire
Si cum vos l'avez oï dire.
Qui la puissance Deu savreit
Niënt ne s'en merveillereit,
Cum Marie virgene enfanta
Quant Deus le volt e comanda.
L'Escriture dit e la letre
Que Moïsés jadis fist metre
.xii. verges qu'il ot seignieees
Encontre les .xii. ligniees
Desus l'alter el tabernacle,
Dunt puis vit hom un grant miracle.
La verge Aaron borjona
En une nuit e fruit porta.
En une nuit, ce savun tuit, fol. 89r
Flori la verge e porta fruit,
Sanz ce qu'ele ne fust plantee
Ne moilliee ne arosee.
Qui la verge fist borjoner
En une nuit e fruit porter,
Ne pot, s'il li vint a plaisir,
Al .viiii. meis de virgene eissir?
Qui fist ciel e terre, air e mer,
E qui l'asnesse fist parler,
E qui la mer fist aovrir
Por sun pueple d'Egipte eissir,
E cels es undes fist perir
Quis siueient por retenir,
Ne pot faire virgene enfanter
E sa virginité garder?
Une semblance vos dirai:

Jesus will save his people
And keep them from sin.'
Thereafter, Joseph had no fear,
Since the angel had spoken so.
He took the virgin and cared for her;
He lived with her chastely.
Serving her and honouring her,
Providing for her and caring for her,
As best he could, in no other way,
He lived with her most chastely.
The time passed
Until she had carried him for nearly eight months.
When Joseph prepared his journey,
He took her to Bethlehem.
There Our Lord was born,
Just as you have heard tell.
Anyone who was aware of God's power
Would not be at all amazed at this,
How Mary gave birth as a virgin
When God wanted and commanded it.
Scripture and the written text state
That in times gone by Moses placed
Twelve rods, which he had blessed,
Against the twelve lineages
On the altar in the tabernacle,
Where a great miracle was later seen.
Aaron's rod came into bud
In one night and bore fruit.
In one night, this we all know,
The rod sprouted and bore fruit,
Without having been planted
Or moistened or watered.
He who caused the rod to bloom
In one night and bear fruit,
Could he not, if he so desired,
Come forth from a virgin in the eighth month?
He who made heaven and earth, air and sea,
And who made the she-ass speak,
And who made the sea open up
To get his people out of Egypt,
And had those perish in the waters
Who were pursuing them in order to keep them prisoner,
Could he not make a virgin give birth
And preserve her virginity?
I shall give you a comparison:

Issi cum li solelz sun rai
Par la verrine met e trait fol. 89v
Qu'a la verrine mal ne fait,
Issi e molt plus sotilment
Entra e issi chastement
En Nostre Dame li fiz Dé.
En terre en sa virginité,
Virgene conçut e enpreigna,
Virgene porta, virgene enfanta,
Virgene alaita, virgene norri,
Virgene remest, virgene vesqui,
E virgene en terre conversa.
De cest mont virgene trespassa,
Virgene en ala a sun seignor,
A sun fil, a sun creator.
Ele est reïne, mere al rei
E Deus sis fiz si l'a o sei.
Virgene est en ciel, virgene est en gloire.
De li deit hom faire memoire
E aveir en li grant fiance, fol. 90r
Quar bien crei e sai sanz dotance,
Qui la mere bien servira
E de bon cuer l'honorera,
Ja n'i faldra qu'il n'ait s'aïe,
O a la mort, o a la vie.
A li deit hom aveir torné
Tot sun corage e sun pensé,
Cum cil qui par mer deit aler
Garde a l'esteile de la mer,
Une esteile qui ne se muet.
Qui conoistre la set e puet
E par li se set governer
Ne puet pas esgarer en mer.
Cele por veir nos senefie
Nostre Dame sainte Marie
Qui molt par est de grant belté
E de bonté e de clarté,
Qui pure fu, clere e estable fol. 90v
E a toz vices secorable.
Icil qui par ceste mer vunt,
Ce sunt li home de cest munt
Qui sunt en grant comocion.
N'i truevë hom se travail non.
La nuit segnefië pechié
Qui tost a home trebuchié.

Just as the sun sends
And withdraws its ray through the window,
Without harming the window,
In the same way, and much more subtly,
The son of God entered in this way,
And just as chastely, into Our Lady.
On earth and in her virgin state
The virgin conceived and became pregnant,
The virgin carried, the virgin gave birth,
The virgin nursed, the virgin raised,
The virgin remained so, the virgin lived,
And the virgin dwelt on earth.
The virgin departed this world,
The virgin went to her lord,
To her son, to her creator.
She is queen, mother to the King
And God, her son, has her with him.
The virgin is in heaven, the virgin is in glory.
People must remember her
And place great trust in her,
For I fully believe and know without doubt that
Those who serve the mother well
And honour her with open heart,
Will never fail to receive her succour,
Either in death or in life.
To her one should have directed
All one's feelings and one's thoughts,
Just as he who has to travel by sea
Studies the star from the sea,
A star that does not move.
He who knows it and can recognise it,
And knows how to navigate by it,
Cannot go astray at sea.
This star in truth signifies to us
Our Lady the Virgin Mary,
Who is of outstanding beauty,
Goodness and radiance,
Who was pure, radiant and steadfast,
And able to offer help for all afflictions.
Those who travel over this sea
Are the people in this world
Who are greatly agitated.
One finds in it nothing but suffering;
The night signifies sin,
Which has soon tripped people up.

Pechiez fait home trebuchier
E avogler e desveier.
Ja n'ert feme si pecheriz
Ne de pechiez hom si laidiz,
S'il reclaime sainte Marie
O bon cuer, qu'il nen ait s'aïe,
Se cil la prie qui foleie,
Tost le remet en dreite veie.
Elle est lumiere a pecheors,
Redrecemenz, veie, secors.
Sainte Marie nos rendi fol. 91r
Le bien que Eve nos toli.
Li saluz nos segnefia
Que li ang*e*les li aporta
Qui premierement dist 'Ave':
Qui cest nom avreit trestorné,
De letre en altre remué,
Ariere en espelant torné,
Qui desist .e. puis .v. e .a.,
Si trovereit cest nom Eva.
Por ce nos a doné entendre,
La dunt Eva nos fist descendre.
Tens est venuz d'ariere aler
La dunt Eva nos fist geter;
De retorner en paradis,
La dunt Eva nos a fors mis.
Par Eva ot hom comencement
De mal, de mort, de haement.
Comenciez nos est par Marie fol. 91v
Restoremenz de nostre vie.
Gace a nom qui fait cest escrit
Qui de sainte Marie a dit,
Coment ele fu anunciee
E conceüe e criëe,
Confaitement ele fu nee
E al temple a .iii. anz portee.
Puis oïstes qu'iluec servi
Tant que .xiiii. anz ot compli,
Coment, par quei Joseph la prist
Qui ja aveir ne la quesist.
Oï avez le mariage
E le salu e le message
Que li ang*e*les li aporta
Quant li fiz Dé s'i aümbra
En la cité de Nasareth.

Sin makes people trip up,
And it blinds and confuses them.
No woman will ever be so sinful,
Nor any man so ravaged by sin,
That, if they call upon the Virgin Mary
With open heart, they will not receive help from her;
If those who are foolishly going astray pray to her,
She soon puts them back on the right path.
She is the light of sinners,
A source of strength, of direction, of succour.
The Virgin Mary gave us back
The good things that Eva took from us.
The greeting was a sign for us
That was brought to her by the angel,
Who began by saying 'Ave'.
Anyone who had turned this name around,
Changed one letter into another
And turned the spelling backwards,
Who said 'e', then 'v' and 'a',
Would then find this name Eva.
By this we are given to understand
The place from where Eva caused us to descend.
The time has come to go back
To that place from which Eva had us thrown out,
To return to paradise,
From which Eva expelled us.
Through Eva man had the beginnings
Of evil, death and hatred.
Through Mary we have the beginnings
Of the restoration of our life.*
Wace is the name of the man who is composing this work,
Which has told of the Virgin Mary,
How she was announced,
Conceived and created,
How she was born
And taken to the temple at the age of three.
Then you heard that she served there
Until she reached the age of fourteen,
How and through what means Joseph took her
Who never sought to have her.
You have heard of the marriage
And the greeting and the message
That the angel brought to her,
When the son of God took shelter
In the city of Nazareth.

Puis oïstes d'Elisabeth
Qui sainte Marie reçut fol. 92r
Quant cil del ventre Dé conut.
Or dirun, o la Dé aïe,
Coment eissi de ceste vie,
Com Deus la fist al ciel monter.
Mais premierement vueil conter
Un petit de sun parenté
Dunt mainte gent avrunt doté.
Une seror ot sainte Anna
Qui ot a nom Esmeria.
Helisabeth fu de li nee
Qui Zacharie fu donee.
De ceste fu cist Johanz nez
Qui Baptistes fu apelez,
Qui le baptisme comença
E Jhesum Christum baptisa.
Sainte Anna, l'altre suer ainz nee,
Treis feiees fu mariëe.
De li furent .iii. filles nees, fol. 92v
Qui Maries sunt apelees.
.iii. serors furent d'une mere
Mais chascune ot par sei sun pere.
Johachim fu pere Marie
Qui nos restora nostre vie.
Quant Joachim fu deviëz
E de cest siecle trespassez,
Si li loerent si ami
Qu'Anna presist altre mari.
Par le los que sa gent li fist
Cleofam, un prodome, prist.
De cez .ii. fu Marie nee
Qui a Alfeüm fu donee.
De li ot .ii. fiz Alfeüs,
Ce fu Josep e Jacobus.
Cil Jacobus apostɛles fu
Si fu frere apelez Jesu. fol. 92v, l. 18
Frere fu dit par parenté
E par valor e par bonté.
Alques li semblot de façon,
Si ert de grant religion.
Ce dit sa vie qu'il vesqui
Molt saintement desqu'il nasqui.
Onques ne but cidre ne vin,
Trestuit si drap furent de lin,

Then you heard about Elizabeth,
Who received the Virgin Mary
When the child in her womb recognised God.
Now we shall tell you, with God's help,
How she left this life,
How God had her ascend to heaven.
But first I want to tell you
A little about her family,
About which many people will have been in doubt.
St Anna had a sister
Whose name was Esmeria.*
Elizabeth was born of her,
Who was given to Zechariah.
From her was born the John
Who was called the Baptist,
Who started baptism
And baptized Jesus Christ.
St Anna, the other, elder sister,
Was married three times.
From her were three daughters born,
Who are called the Marys;
Three sisters were from one mother,
But each one had her own father.
Joachim was the father of Mary
Who restored our lives to us.
When Joachim was dead
And had passed from this world,
Her friends advised Anna
To take another husband.
Through the advice of her people
She took Cleophas, a worthy man.
From these two Mary was born
Who was given to Alphaeus.
From her Alphaeus had two sons:
They were Joseph and James.*
This James was an apostle
And was called Jesus's brother.
He was called brother through his family,*
And through his worth and his goodness.
He looked rather like him in his features
And was a very holy man.
It says he lived his life
In a very saintly fashion right from birth.
He never drank cider or wine
And all his clothes were of linen;

Onques de nule vesteüre
Qui fu de laine n'ot il cure.
Nen ot cure de char mangier,
Ne cessot pas de Deu preier.
Tant fu li sainz a genoillons
E tant ora a oreisons
Que li chalz li fu creüz grant
Desor les .ii. genolz devant.
Cil Jaques puis la passion
La ou il faiseit son sermon,
Fu en Jherussalem ocis,
Si en ala en paradis.
Anne puis la mort Cleophas
Refu donee a Salomas.
D'els .ii. fu une fille nee
Qui refu Marie apelee.
Si fu donee a Zebedee,
Un prodome de Galilee.
De li furent né dui baron.
Le graignor Jaque apele l'on
Qui Herodes fist decoller
Le chief, o un glaive coper.
L'altre fu Johans apelez
E si fu de Deu molt amez.
Je ne di pas Johan Baptiste,
Ainz di Johan l'Evangeliste.
Cestui ama plus Jhesus Crist
Que nul des altres quil servist.
Por ce l'ama meesmement
Que il vesqui virginalment.*
Por ce l'ot en graignor cherté, fol. 93r
Qu'il garda sa virginité.
Les apostɛles toz sormonta
De virginité qu'il garda.
Quant por nostre redemption
Sofri Jhesus Crist passion
E por noz pechiez fu dampnez
E en la sainte cruiz levez,
Li apostɛle lu deguerpirent,
De la paor se departirent.
Unc n'i remest que saint Johan
Qui vit le travail e l'ahan
E les plaies e les dolors
Que sofri Deus por pecheors.
Quant en la cruiz fu li salvere,

He never had any desire
For any clothes that were made of wool.
He had no desire to eat meat
And never ceased praying to God.
The saint was on his knees for so long,
And spent so much time praying,
That great inflammation was generated
On his two knees at the front.
After the Passion, this James,
In the place where he was giving his sermon,
Was killed in Jerusalem
And went to paradise.
Anna, after the death of Cleophas,
Was given in marriage again, to Salome.
From these two a daughter was born
Who again was called Mary.
She was given to Zebedee,
A worthy man from Galilee.
From her were born two fine boys.
The elder was called James,
Who had his head removed
By Herod, cut off with a sword.
The other was called John
And he was very much loved by God.
I do not mean John the Baptist,
Rather John the Evangelist.*
This man was loved more by Jesus Christ
Than any of the others who served him.
The reason why he loved him in this way was
Because he lived his life as a virgin.
The reason why he loved him more dearly was
Because he kept his virginity.
The apostle surpassed everyone
In keeping his virginity.
When for our redemption
Jesus Christ suffered the Passion
And was condemned for our sins
And raised on to the holy cross.
The apostles abandoned him;
Departing out of fear.
The only one to remain was Saint John,
Who saw the agony and the suffering,
The wounds and the pains,
That God suffered for sinners.
When the Saviour was on the cross,

Dejoste la cruiz vit sa mere
E Johan avuec qu'il ama.
L'un d'els a l'altre comanda,
A maintenir e a garder fol. 93v
E a servir e a amer,
Qu'ele fust mere e il fust fiz.
Cil firent bien segon ses diz.
Cil qui esteit niés fiz devint
E por mere l'ante se tint.
Al nevo fu l'ante livree.
Corteise fu cele asemblee
Que virgenes hom virgene gardast
E virgene a virgene acompaignast.
Corteisement l'apareilla
Qui virgene a virgene comanda.
Mais molt par est boneürez,
Seit hom seit feme, qui seit nez
Qui puet virginité garder.
Per as angeles lu fait sembler
Qui ceste bonté a perdue.
Jamais ne li sera rendue,
Ja puis ne sera recovree fol. 94r
Cui ele ert une feiz emblee.
Bien deit hom de perdre garder
Ce que hom ne puet recovrer.
Altres vertuz, altres bontez
Puet recovrer qui vuelt asez.
Qui est eissuz de chasteé,
Chastes seit s'il lait puteé.
Qui deguerpist humilité,
Humles seit si a sa bonté.
Qui guerpist a estre almosnier
A ce puet il bien repairier.
Qui de bien est venuz en vice,
Com de largece en avarice,
De ce se puet il bien retraire
Se il encontre vuelt bien faire.
Qui deguerpira sa vertu,
Repreigne la, si ert que fu.
Virginité vait altrement, fol. 94v
Del recovrer est puis niënt:
Virginité ne puet hom mie
Puis recovrer qu'ele est perie.
Ceste garda sainz Johanz bien,
Ne la volsist perdre por rien.

Next to the cross he saw his mother,
Together with John whom he loved.
He entrusted them to each other,
For support and care,
And to serve and love each other,
Because she was the mother and he the son;
They acted precisely in accordance with his words.
He who was the nephew became the son
And he considered his aunt as his mother;
The aunt was handed over to the nephew.
This union was of high quality,
Because a male virgin took care of a female virgin,
And a virgin was companion to a virgin.
This was cleverly arranged
By him who entrusted a virgin to a virgin.
But that person is very fortunate,
Man or woman, who is born
With the ability to preserve virginity.
This makes them seem on a par with the angels
To anyone who has lost this goodness.
It will never be restored,
And it can never be recovered afterwards
By anyone who has lost it once.
One should take great care not to lose
What one cannot recover.
Other virtues, other fine qualities
Can be recovered by those who have a great desire.
Those who have forsaken chastity,
Let them be chaste and abandon debauchery;
Those who have deserted humility,
Let them be humble and display goodness;
Those who have failed to give alms
Can easily rectify this;
Those who from goodness have turned to wickedness,
Just as from largesse to avarice,
Can change this easily
If they are willing to do the opposite.
Those who abandon their virtue,
Let them take it back and it will be as it was.
Virginity works differently;
Recovery is later impossible.
One cannot recover virginity
Later, once it has gone.*
Saint John was very careful in this respect;
He would not have wanted to lose it for anything.

Por ceste vertu l'ot Deus chier,
S'en fist sun privé chamberier
E sa mere li comanda,
E a la fin molt l'enora,
Quar al terme que fenir dut,
Nostre Sire li aparut
E si li dist: 'Vien t'en, amis,
A tes freres en paradis'.
En sun sepulcre vis entra
E ses compaignons salua
E a covrir se comanda.
Issi dit hom que il fina.
Quant l'om dut le cors regarder fol. 95r
Que l'om iluec cuida trover,
N'i truevë hom se mana non.
Ce nos reconta la leçon,
Mana resemblot de blanchor
Novele neif e blanche flor.
Cist sainz Johanz que je vos di,
Issi cum Deus l'ot establi,
Ot en garde e en compaignie
Nostre Dame, sainte Marie.
Quant li apostele preechierent
E par le munt Dé anuncierent
E il orent issi sorti,
Que tuit se furent departi,
Johanz a sa dame ostel prist,
Delez Mont-en-Sion la mist,
O la gent de sun parenté
Qui molt l'orent en grant cherté.
Virgenes plusors o li aveit fol. 95v
Qu'ele enseignot e norrisseit.
L'altre an apres la passion
Esteit Nostre Dame a maison,
Sole en un leu priveement
S'i prist a plorer tendrement
Por amor e por desirier
De son dolz fil qu'ele ot tant chier.
Por desirier del rei altisme
Se dementot a sei meïsme:
'Molt volsisse, se Dé pleüst,
Que desormais me receüst.
Forment desir que je la fusse
O je mun fil veeir poüsse.
Bels sire fiz, regarde mei,

Because of this strength God cherished him,
Made him his mother's personal guardian
And entrusted her to him.
In the end he honoured him greatly,
For, when his life came to an end,
Our Lord appeared to him
And said: 'Come, my friend,
To your brothers in paradise'.
He entered his tomb still alive,
Said farewell to his companions
And charged them with covering him up.
This is how people say he ended.
When the time came to view the body
That people expected to find there,
The only thing found there was manna.
This is what the text tells us;
In whiteness he was like manna,
Fresh snow and a white flower.
This Saint John I am telling you about,
Just as God had appointed it,
Had the duty of care and companionship for
Our Lady, the Virgin Mary.
When the apostles preached
And announced God throughout the world,
And when they had set out in this way,
So that they were all spread out,
John found lodging for his lady,
Placing her beside Mount Zion,*
With members of her family
Who held her very dear.
There were many virgins with her
Whom she instructed and nurtured.
The other year, after the Passion,
Our Lady was at home,
Alone in a place and in privacy,
And she began to weep tenderly
Because of love and desire
For her sweet son, whom she had cherished so much.
Because of her desire for the King on High
She lamented to herself:
'I would very much like, if it pleased God,
That he should receive me forthwith.
I have a great desire to be in that place
Where I could see my son.
Fair lord son, look favourably upon me,

Fai que je puisse estre avuec tei
La ou tu es en paradis
Que tu promez a tes amis.'
A ce que la dame plorot fol. 96r
Por sun fil que tant desirot,
Ez vox l'angele Nostre Seignor.
O merveillose resplendor,
Devant li vint si li dona
Un raim de palmier qu'il porta.
Li angeles devant li s'estut,
Salua la si cum il dut.
Puis li a dit: 'De paradis
T'a Deus par mei cest raim tramis.
De cest siecle trespasseras,
D'ui a tierz jor en ciel iras.
Tis fiz t'atent o ses archangeles,
O ses vertuz e o ses angeles.
Devant ta biere fai porter
Le raim que il t'a fait doner.'
Quant la virgene ot le raim eü,
A l'angele a itant respondu:
'Jesum puisse je gracïer, fol. 96v
Mais ce te pri e te requier,
Que ci seient o mei cel jor
Tuit li apostele mon seignor'.
Encontre ce li angeles dist:
'Par la vertu de Jhesu Crist
Serunt ici tuit asemblé
Si come tu as demandé'.
Quant il angeles ot si parlé
E le raim de sa main livré
E il fu de la chambre eissuz,
La dame a meillors dras vestuz.
Puis est de la chambre tornee,
En mont Olivet est montee.
Le raim porta, oreison fist,
A Dé parla e si li dist:
'Deus gloriables, reis benigne,
Unques nul jor ne fui tant digne
Que tu descendre en mei deüsses, fol. 97r
Se tu de mei merci n'eüsses,
E nequedent bien ai gardé
Le tresor que tu m'as doné.
Por ce pri, reis de maiesté,
Que nule infernal poësté

Bring it about that I can be with you,
Where you are, in paradise,
Which you promise to your friends.'
While the lady wept
For her son, whom she desired so much,
Lo, the angel of Our Lord,
In a marvellous light,
Came before her and gave her
An olive branch he was carrying.
The angel stood before her
And greeted her as he rightly should.
Then he said to her: 'From paradise
Has God sent you this branch through me.
You will leave this world
And in three days will go to heaven.
Your son awaits you with his archangels,
And with his miracles and his angels.
Have the branch that he has given you
Carried before your bier.'
When the virgin had received the branch,
She replied to the angel:
'May I thank Jesus,
But this I beg and request of you,
That all the apostles of my Lord
Should be here with me today'.
To this the angel replied:
'Through the power of Jesus Christ,
They will all be gathered here,
Just as you have asked'.
When the angel had spoken thus,
Handed over the branch in his hand
And left the chamber,
The lady put on her best clothes.
Then she left the chamber
And climbed the Mount of Olives.*
She carried the branch, said her prayer,
Spoke to God and said to him:
'O glorious God, benign King,
Never on any day was I worthy enough
For you to have to come down in me,
Unless you had mercy on me,
And nevertheless I have taken great care of
The treasure you gave me.
For this I ask, O King of Majesty,
That no devilish power

Ne me puisse faire noisance
Ne n'ait vers mei nule poissance.
Receif mei en ta compaignie
O tei en la durable vie,
El ciel o angele chascun jor
Tremblent devant tei de paor.
Bien deit hom estre espoentez
Qui de terre est faiz e formez,
Qui nen a bien, nen a plenté,
Fors tant cum Deus li a doné.
Tot le bien qu'om a receü
A l'om de ta largece eü.'
Quant la dame ot fait s'oreison, fol. 97v
Si est repairiee a maison.
Idunc apela ses veisins
E ses parenz e ses cosins,
Si lor dist: 'Vos qui estes ci,
Oëz, creez ce que je di.
De cest siecle torner me dei,
E Deus m'en vuelt mener o sei.
Por ce vos pri que vos veiliez
Deci que vos ma fin veiez,
Sachiez que quant hom deit morir
E l'arme deit del cors eissir,
Dui angele entor le cors descendent,
Mut ententif, qui l'arme atendent.
Li uns de ciel est descenduz
E li altre est d'enfer venuz.
Chascuns a sei vuelt l'arme traire,
Mais molt est lor vie contraire,
Quar segun ce que l'arme a fait, fol. 98r
En enfer chiet o en ciel vait.
Mais de mei ne seit pas dotance
Que negune male puissance
Me puisse faire destorbier
Ne ja vers mei ost aprismier.'
La dame esteit en son ostel
E parlot e d'iço e d'el.
Sainz Johanz qui a garder l'ot,
En Ephese o li preechot
Un diëmeine a nuit esteit,
Que al pueple sermon faiseit.
Ez vos un terremote fist
E une nue vint sil prist,
D'entre le pueple le leva,

Can cause me harm
Or have any power over me.
Receive me into your company,
Together with you in life everlasting,
In heaven where each day angels
Tremble before you in fear.
It is right for everyone to be in fear
Who has been created and formed from earth,
Who does not have goodness and does not have plenty,
Except for that which God has given them.
All the goodness people have received
Has come from your largesse.'
When the lady had said her prayer,
She returned home.
Then she called her neighbours,
Her family and her cousins,
And said to them: 'You who are here,
Listen to me, accept what I am telling you.
I must depart from this world
And God wants to take me to him.
For this reason I beg you to hold vigil
Until you see my end;
Know that when one must die
And the soul must depart from the body,
Two angels come down near the body,
Expectantly, waiting for the soul.
One of them has come down from heaven
And the other has come from hell.
Each wants to draw the soul towards him,
But their lives are very different,
For according to what the soul has done
It falls into hell or goes to heaven.
But in my case let there be no fear
That any evil power
Can cause any disruption for me,
Or ever dare to approach me.'
The lady was in her lodging,
Speaking of this and that.
Saint John, whose task it was to care for her,
Was in Ephesus, where he preached,
One Sunday night;
While he was preaching to the people,
Lo, there was an earthquake
And a cloud came and seized him.
It lifted him up from amongst the people,

En Mont-en-Syon le porta,
A l'ostel u la dame fu.
Quant Nostre Dame l'a veü
E il fu aprismiez a li, fol. 98v
'Johanz', dist ele, 'ore te pri
Que tu aies en remembrance,
Nel metre pas en obliance,
Les paroles que Deus parla
Quant il a tei me comanda.
Quar a .iii. jor desevrera
M'arme del cors, si s'en ira.
Mais li Jüeu unt porparlé
E de ce lor conseil fermé,
Qu'il en apres ferunt ardeir
Mon cors s'il lu pueent aveir,
Por sol ice que je portai
Cume mun fil e alaitai
Jhesum Christum, Nostre Seignor
Qu'il teneient por seduitor.'
Dunc va la dame en un requei,
Saint Johan mena avuec sei, fol. 98v, l. 18
Si li mostra un vestement
A son ensevelissement.
'Johanz', dist ele, 'tien cez dras
Dont ensevelir me feras.'
Puis li mostra le raim qu'ele ot
Qui lumiere molt grant getot,
Si li rova faire porter
Devant la biere a l'enterrer.
'Dame', dist il, 'je ne puis mie
Tel mestier faire sanz aïe,
Ne puis sols faire tel mestier
Ne ton sepulcre apareillier
Se li apost*e*le o mei ne sont
Qui ta sepulture feront.'
Endementres qu'issi parloent
E les apost*e*les remembroent,
Ez vos les apost*e*les venuz
E d'une nue descenduz.
Cele nue les aporta,
Dc plusors leus les asembla
O il ierent por preechier
E por la lei Deu anoncier.
Se vos volez, de cez barons
Vos puet l'on bien dire les nons:

And carried him to Mount Zion,*
To the lodging where the lady was.
When Our Lady saw him,
And he had approached her,
'John', she said, 'now I beg you
To bear in mind,
And never let fall into oblivion,
The words that God spoke
When he entrusted me to you.
For on the third day my soul
Will separate from my body and depart.
But the Jews have decided,
And come to a decision on this matter,
That afterwards they will burn
My body if they can get hold of it,
For the sole reason that I carried
As my son and suckled
Jesus Christ, Our Lord,
Whom they regarded as a traitor.'
Then the Lady went into a secret place,
Taking Saint John with her,
And she showed him a garment
To be used for her burial.
'John', she said, 'take this clothing
In which you will bury me.'
Then she showed him the branch she had
That gave off a very great light,
And asked him to have it carried
Before her bier at the burial.
'My lady', he said, 'I cannot do
Such a thing without help;
On my own I cannot do such a thing,
Or prepare your tomb,
If the apostles, who will see to your
Burial, are not with me.'
While they were talking in this way
And remembering the apostles,
Lo, the apostles arrived
And came down from a cloud.
This cloud had brought them
And gathered them together from various places,
Where they had been preaching
And announcing God's law.
If you wish, it is possible
To tell you the names of these men.

Pieres, Johanz, Jaques, Andreus,
L'altere Jaques, Judes, Matheus,
Bertelemeus, Philip, Thomas,
Symon; li doziemes, Judas,
Fu mis fors de lor compaignie
Por ce qu'il fist la felonie.
Mathias fu en son leu mis
Qui par sort fu esliz e pris.
Quant devant l'ostel venu furent
O la dame ert si se conurent.
Conurent sei si s'entrevirent,
Baisierent sei, grant joie firent.
A merveillose chose tindrent fol. 99r
Qu'en tel maniere ensemble vindrent,
E si n'en sorent l'achaison,
Por quei vindrent ne por quei non.
Dunc est sainz Johanz hors eissuz
De la maison, sis a veüz,
Ensemble a saluëz,
Puis les a en l'ostel menez.
Quant li baron dedenz entrerent,
Nostre Dame issi saluerent:
'L'altismes reis te beneïe'.
'E vos', ce dit sainte Marie.
'Or me dites comfaitement
Venu estes tant sodement.'
Sainz Johanz respondi premier:
'En Ephase ere preechier
Quant une nue illuec me prist,
D'entr'els m'enbla, ici me mist'.
E chascuns redist ensement fol. 99v
De quel terre vint e coment.
'Deus', dist ele, 'seit merciëz,
Qui ci vos a toz asemblez
A faire mei confortement
Encontre mon trespassement.
Mais or, seignor, veilier devun
E estre tuit en oreisun,
Jusqu'a l'ore que Deus vendra
E l'arme del cors partira.'
Quant il li orent otreié
E jusques al .iii. jor veilié,
E en aflictions esté,
Damnedé preié e loé,
Al .iii. jor endreit la tierce ore

Peter, John, James, Andrew,
The other James, Jude, Matthew,
Bartholomew, Philip, Thomas,
Simon; the twelfth, Judas,
Was expelled from their number
Because of his act of treachery.
Matthias was put in his place,
Who was elected and chosen by lot.
When they arrived before the altar,
He was with Our Lady and they recognised each other.
They recognised and saw each other,
Kissed and displayed great joy.
They marvelled at the fact
That they had come together in such a way
And they did not know the reason for it,
Why they came or why they did not.
Then Saint John came out
Of the dwelling and saw them.
He greeted them all,
Then took them into the lodging.
When the men had gone inside,
They greeted Our Lady with these words:
'May the King on High bless you'.
'And you', said the Virgin Mary.
'Now tell me how it is that
You have come so suddenly.'
Saint John replied first:
'I was preaching in Ephesus
When a cloud seized me there;
It took me away from them and placed me here'.
Each of them explained in similar fashion
From which land he had come and how.*
'God be thanked', she said,
'Who has brought you all together here
To provide me with comfort
In anticipation of my death.
But now, my lords, we must keep vigil
And all be at prayer,
Until the time God comes
And the soul leaves my body.'
When they had agreed this
And kept vigil until the third day,
And been at penance,
Prayed to and beseeched the Lord God,
On the third day around Tierce*

Uns tels sumelz lor corut sore
Que nen ot home en la maison
Qui ne dormist, s'apostele non.
Li apostele pas ne dormeient fol. 100r
Ne treis virgenes qu'iluec esteient.
Quant li altre sunt endormi,
Jesus Crist entr'els descendi.
Ensemble o lui ot grant clarté
E de ses angeles grant plenté,
Qui chantoent par grant dolçor
E looent Nostre Seignor.
Lor chant ne vos puis je pas dire.
Dunc parla issi Nostre Sire:
'Marie, gemme preciose,
Virgene saintisme, meie espose,
Vien en la pardurable vie
O l'angelial compaignie.
Je sui tis fiz, si sui tis pere.
Tu es ma fille e es ma mere.
Bien est dreiture e je l'otrei
Que tu seies ensemble o mei.
Tu me portas, tu me norris, fol. 100v
Tu m'alaitas, tu me servis.
Quant je por le pueple salver
Deignai en terre converser,
Unques ne poi feme trover,
Fors tei, o je deüsse entrer.
Chambre, ostel, recet me fus
E volentiers me receüs.
Desor seras boneüree
E reïne el ciel coronee.
Je sui reis, tu seras reïne,
Tote gent ert vers tei acline.
La poësté d'aidier avras
A trestoz cels que tu voldras.'
Quant Nostre Dame ot ce oï,
Jus a la terre s'estendi,
Oreison fist molt humlement
E preia Deu omnipotent:
'Deus, qui eslire me deignas fol. 101r
E tun secré me comandas,
Si cum tu ses que je t'amai
E tun comandement gardai
E tot ce fis que tu volsis,
M'arme receif en paradis'.

Such a sleep came over them
That no one in the dwelling
Failed to sleep, except for the apostles.
The apostles did not sleep,
Nor did three virgins who were there.
When the others had fallen asleep,
Jesus Christ descended amongst them.
He was accompanied by a great light
And a large number of his angels,
Who sang with great sweetness
And praised Our Lord.
I cannot describe their singing to you.
Then Our Lord spoke in these words:
'Mary, precious gem,
Most holy virgin, my spouse,
Come to everlasting life
With the company of angels.
I am your son, I am your father;
You are my daughter and you are my mother.
It is right and I grant it
That you should be with me.
You bore me, you raised me,
You suckled me, you served me.
When, in order to save people,
I deigned to live on earth,
I could never find any woman,
Except for you, in whom I could find a home.
You were my bedchamber, my lodging, my retreat,
And you received me willingly.
Henceforth you will be blessed
And crowned queen in heaven.
I am king, you will be queen,
Everyone will bow down to you.
You will have the power to provide succour
For all those you desire.'
When Our Lady had heard this,
She fell prostrate on the ground,
Said a prayer most humbly
And prayed to God Almighty:
'O God, who deigned to choose me
And entrusted your mysteries to me,
Just as you know that I loved you,
Kept your commandment
And did everything you wished,
Receive my soul in paradise'.

Quant ele ot s'oreison finee,
El lit ariere s'est posee
Dunc est l'arme del cors eissue
E Jesus Crist l'a receüe.
A saint Michiel la comanda
E sainz Michiel bien la garda,
E sainz Gabriël avuec lui.
Ce sunt li maistre archangele dui.
Li angele en ont l'arme portee
Qui Damnedeus l'ot comandee.
Li angele vunt entor chantant
E molt dolcement Deu loant.
O ses angeles vait li salvere, fol. 101v
Grant joie funt tuit de sa mere.
En Mont-en-Syon, ce creun,
Fu faite cele asumptiun,
Si cum diënt li anciën,
Ermine, Grec e Suriën.
Iluec prist Deus l'arme sa mere,
Dunt il esteit e fiz e pere.
Iluec en est li leus mostrez
E chier tenuz e henorez.
E Jesus Crist ot comandé
A destre part de la cité
Le cors a la dame porter
E el sepulcre iluec poser.
Les .iii. virgenes qu'iluec esteient
E qui o els veillié aveient,
Le cors saintisme despoillierent
E a laver l'apareillierent.
Tant le troverent blanc e cler fol. 102r
Qu'eles nel porent esgarder,
Quar tant i ot de la blanchor
E tant ert grant la resplendor
Que le cors veeir ne poeient,
E sil bailloent e teneient.
Quant eles ont le cors lavé
E puis vestu e conreé,
En une biere le colchierent.
Idunc a primes s'esveillierent
Icil qui devant s'endormirent,
Leverent sus, la biere virent.
Quant unt fait l'apareillement,
Come d'aler al monument,
Entr'els diënt e vont querant

When she had finished her prayer,
She lay back on the bed;
Then her soul left her body
And Jesus Christ received it.
He entrusted it to Saint Michael
And Saint Michael guarded it well,
Together with St Gabriel.
These are the two chief archangels.
The angels to whom the Lord God
Had entrusted her carried the soul away.
They sang all around her,
Praising God very sweetly.
The Saviour accompanied the angels
And they all rejoiced for his mother.
On Mount Zion, we believe,*
Did this Assumption take place,
Just as our ancestors tell us,
Armenian, Greek and Syrian.
There God took the soul of his mother,
Whose son and father he was.
There the place was revealed,
Cherished and honoured.
Jesus Christ gave orders
For the body of Our Lady
To be taken to the right side of the city,
And to be placed there in the tomb.
The three virgins who were there,
And who had kept vigil with them,
Undressed the holy body
And prepared it for washing.*
They found the body so white and fair
That they could not look upon it,
For so great was the whiteness,
And so gleaming was the light from it,
That they could not see the body,
So they took hold of it and held on to it.
When they had washed the body
And then dressed and prepared it,
They laid it on a bier.
Then those who had fallen asleep earlier
Awoke there for the first time;
They rose and saw the bier.
When they had made the preparations
To go to the tomb,
They spoke about and discussed

Qui portera le raim avant
Qui ert venuz de paradis.
Dunc a sainz Johanz le raim pris,
A saint Piere le volt livrer: fol. 102v
'Tu deis, dist il, avant aler,
Tu as desur nos la maistrie
E trestote la seignorie.
Tu deis les cles del ciel tenir,
Paradis clore e aovrir.
Par tei deit hom aveir l'entree,
La poësté t'en est donee.'
E sainz Pieres li respondi:
'Amis Johanz, n'iert pas issi.
Tu es virgenes de grant bonté,
Si es de grant auctorité,
Qui dormis sur le piz Jesu
La nuit que la traïson fu;
E quant il en la cruiz fu mis,
Tu qui esteies sis amis,
Sa mere a garder receüs.
Virgene esteit e tu virgenes fus.
Tu deis aler devant la biere fol. 103r
E porter le raim de lumiere.
Nos altre le cors porterun
E cel altre mestier ferun.'
Sainz Johanz issi l'otreia
Cum sainz Pieres li esgarda.
Dunc a sainz Pieres pris le cors,
De la maison le metent hors.
Al metre hors de la maison
Dist un salme qui si a non:
In exitu Israel de Egypto
Domus Iacob de populo barbaro.*
Quant la biere fu hors eissue,
Devers le ciel vint une nue.
Quis avirona e covri
E tot entor els s'espandi.
Li apostele comunement
Dedenz chantoent dolcement.
O els esteit la grant clartez
Del raim qui est devant portez.
Cil de Jerusalem oïrent fol. 103v
Le chant que li apostele firent,
Puis eissirent hors de la vile,
Qu'home que femes .xv. mile

Who would carry in front the branch
That had come from paradise.
Then Saint John took the branch;
He tried to hand it to Saint Peter:
'You must', he said, 'walk in front.
You have mastery over us
And complete sovereignty.
It is your task to hold the keys of heaven,
To open and close paradise.
Through you one must gain entry;
Power over this has been given to you.'
Saint Peter replied to him:
'My friend John, it will not be thus.
You are a virgin of great goodness
And you possess great authority,
You who slept on Jesus's breast
On the night of the betrayal,
And when he was placed on the cross
You who were his friend
Who had accepted to care for his mother.
She was a virgin and you were a virgin.
You must go before the bier
And carry the branch of light.
The rest of us will carry the body
And perform the other duties.'
Saint John agreed to this,
As Saint Peter decreed.*
Then Saint Peter took the body;
They took it outside the house.
As it was being taken outside,
He recited a psalm that is called:
In exitu Israel de Egypto
Domus Iacob de populo barbaro.*
When the bier was outside,
From the direction of heaven there came a cloud,
Which surrounded and covered them,
And it spread all around them.
The apostles with one voice
Sang sweetly within it.
Accompanying them was the great light
From the branch that was being carried in front.
The inhabitants of Jerusalem heard
The singing of the apostles,
And then there left the city
Fifteen thousand men and women,

Qui tuit aloent demandant
Qui ert qui faiseit si dolz chant.
Sempres fu venuz qui lor dist
Que Marie, la mere Crist,
Ere le jor a fin venue,
L'arme esteit ja del cors eissue,
E li apostele issi chantoent
Qui el sepulcre la portoent.
Dunc unt la biere aperceüe
E la clarté dedenz veüe.
Un de Jüeus i ot, un maistre,
Qui s'en comença a iraistre,
Par sun maltalent e par s'ire
Comença a Jüeus a dire:
'Venez o mei e si pernun fol. 104r
La biere o tut le cors ardun.
Ço est la mere al sozduitor
Par qui nos fumes en error.
Toz les apostеles occiun
Que nul mais vivre n'en laissun.'
Es les vos encontre venuz
O trenchanz glaives e o fuz.
Mais il ne lor porent mal faire,
Desore els en vint la contraire.
Deus fist les plusors avogler
Que il ne sorent u aler.
Cil qui ot dit le mal avant
Devant les altres vint corant.
Ses .ii. mains mist desor la biere,
Enpeinst avant e traist ariere,
Que tot volt abatre a quasser
E le raim de palmier porter.
Mais il faili a sun pensé, fol. 104v
Ne pot faire sa volenté;
Quar les mains si furent sechiees
E a la biere si fichiees,
Tote li faili la vertuz,
Par les mains fu al lit penduz.
Nen ot as mains point de vigor,
Par tot le cors ot grant dolor.
Ne pot ses mains ariere aveir,
N'amunt n'aval nes pot moveir.
Comença sei a esmaier
E les apostеles a preier.
Toz les requist comunement,

All of whom were asking
Who it was who sang so sweetly.
Someone soon came and told them
That Mary, the mother of Christ,
Had that day come to her end;
Her soul had now left her body,
And the apostles were singing in this way
Who were carrying her to the tomb.
Then they caught sight of the bier
And saw the light inside.
One of the Jews there, a master,
Who began to get angry at this,
In his anger and wrath,
Began to say to the Jews:
'Come with me and let's seize
The bier and burn the entire body.
That is the mother of the traitor
Who induced us into error.
Let us kill all the apostles
So that we don't leave any of them alive.'
Lo, they advanced towards them,
With sharp swords and staves.
But they were unable to hurt them;
The harm was done to them.
God caused many of them to go blind,
So that they did not know where to go.
The man whose wicked words had started it all
Came running in front of the others.
He placed his two hands on the bier,
Pushed it forward and dragged it back,
Trying to knock the whole thing down, shatter it
And carry off the palm branch.
But he failed in his intentions.
He could not do what he wanted,
For his hands were so dried up,
And so stuck to the bier,
That all his strength failed
And he was hanging on to the bed by his hands.
He had no strength in his hands
And his whole body was wracked with pain;
He could not pull his hands away,
Nor could he move them up or down.
He began to be frightened
And to entreat the apostles.
He called upon them as a body,

E saint Piere meesmement,
Que del lit ses mains departist
E santé aveir li fesist,
E il li rendist sa vertu.
Sainz Pieres li a respondu:
'N'est mie en nostre poësté fol. 105r
Que tu aies de nos santé
Se primes ne creiz el fil Dé
Que vos avez a tort dampné'.
'Pieres', dist il, 'bien le creun,
E sanz dotance le savun,
Que Deus est Crist poëstëïs,
Reis e sire de paradis;
Mais deables nos a sorpris
E noz cuers en tenebres mis.
Ne lairai pas que je nel die,
Je crei el fil sainte Marie.'
Des que ii dist itant: 'Je crei',
Si traist il ses .ii. mains a sei
E si estut desor ses piez;
Mais les .ii. braz ot si plaissiez
Que il nes pot amunt lever,
Ne a sun chief nes pot porter.
Dunc recomença a preier fol. 105v
Les sainz qu'il li vuellent aidier.
Sainz Pieres dist 'Toz es gariz
Se tu si creiz come tu diz,
Toche a la biere de tes mains,
Baise le lit, si seras sains;
Crei en Jhesu, si tien sa lei,
Porte le raim de palme o tei.
Si toche a cels qui lor veües
Unt par pechié de vos perdues.
S'il en Dé creient, si garrunt,
Se non, jamais rien ne verunt.'
Issi cum sainz Pieres li dist,
Fu toz gariz e le raim prist.
Vait a sa gent, si a conté
Coment porront aveir santé.
S'il en Dé unt la lor creance,
Lor veüe avrunt sanz dotance.
Conta lor le mal qu'il senti fol. 106r
E coment il esteit gari.
Alquanz i ot d'els qui creïrent,
Le raim tochierent, si garirent.

And upon Saint Peter himself,
To release his hands from the bed,
Restore his health to him
And give him back his strength.
Saint Peter replied to him:
'It is not in our power
For you to have health from us,
Unless you first believe in the son of God,
Whom you have wrongly condemned'.
'Peter', he said, 'we believe in him,
And know without doubt
That God is Christ in power,
King and Lord of Paradise;
But the Devil has taken hold of us
And placed our hearts in darkness.
I shall not fail to say this:
I believe in the son of the Virgin Mary.'
As soon as he said 'I believe',
He drew his two hands towards him
And was back on his feet;
But his two arms were so bent
That he could not raise them on high
Or lift them up to his head.
Then he began to entreat
The saints to be willing to help him.
Saint Peter said: 'You will be completely cured
If you do believe what you have just said.
Touch the bier with your hands,
Kiss the bed and you will be healed.
Believe in Jesus and keep his law,
Carry the palm branch with you
And touch those who have lost
Their sight through your sin.
If they believe in God, they will get better,
If not, they will never see anything again.'
Just as Saint Peter had told him,
He was completely cured and took the branch.
He went to his people and told them
How they could regain their health.
If they put their belief in God,
They would have their sight without doubt.
He told them of the pain he had felt
And how he had been cured.
There were some of them who believed;
They touched the branch and were cured.

Cil qui ne voldrent Deu preier
Ne a lor ueilz le raim tochier,
Remestrent issi cum il erent,
Lumiere puis ne recovrerent.
Li apostele unt le cors porté
La ou Jesus l'ot comandé.
El val de Josaphat le mistrent
E el sepulcre entor s'asistrent.
Sempres fu d'iluec remuëz,
N'i fu puis veüz ne trovez,
Ne puis dire ne afermer,
Ne je nel vueil ci aconter,
Que hom ne feme qui vesquist
Puis cele hore le cors veïst.
Li sepulcre a esté mostrez, fol. 106v
Mais li cors ne fu puis trovez.
E li apostele furent mis
La o la nue les ot pris.
En la guise e en la maniere
Que il vindrent, revont ariere
Chascuns fu en sa region
Faire sa predicacion.
Ancor parest e ancor dure*
En Josaphat la sepulture,
O li cors Nostre Dame fu
Qui puis n'i pot estre veü.
Le jor meïsme en fu portez
Que el sepulcre fu posez.
Le cors n'i pot hom puis trover
Quar Deus l'ot fait resusciter.
Se l'om demande que je crei
Del cors, s'il est en ciel par sei
E l'arme par sei ensement, fol. 107r
De ce respondrai je briément:
Ce crei qu'ele est resuscitee
E vive e mielz qu'ele n'iert nee.
La char de li fu sanz luxure,
Bien deit estre sanz porreture.
Ne deit mie la char porrir
Ne par porreture perir
Dunt la char Damnedé fu faite
E nee e conceüe e traite.
De l'une char est l'altre nee
E l'une o l'altre est honoree.
Cil qui le cors e l'arme fist

Those who refused to pray to God,
Or to touch the branch with their eyes,
Remained just as they were;
They did not get back any light.*
The apostles carried the body
To where Jesus had commanded it.
They placed it in the valley of Josaphat
And sat down around the tomb.*
It was soon taken away from there
And thereafter was not seen or found.
I cannot say or affirm,
And I do not wish to relate it here,
That any man or woman alive
Saw the body after that time.
The tomb has been pointed out,
But the body was henceforth not found.
The apostles were returned to the place
From where the cloud had taken them.
In the way and the manner
In which they came, they went back;
Each one was in his region
To continue with his preaching.
Still visible and still surviving*
Is the tomb in Josaphat,
Where the body of Our Lady was,
Which could not thereafter be seen.
It was taken away on the very day
It was placed in the tomb.
No one could find the body afterwards,
For God had brought it back to life.
If asked what I believe
About the body, if it is alone in heaven,
Together with the soul,
To this I shall respond briefly:
I believe this, that she was brought back to life
And is alive, better than when she was born.
Her flesh was devoid of lust;
It is right for it not to become rotten.
That flesh should not rot,
Or perish through rottenness,
From which the flesh of the Lord God was created,
Born, conceived and drawn forth.
From one flesh was the other born
And the one is honoured with the other.
He who created the body and the soul,

E cors e arme ensemble mist
Pot bien le cors resusciter
E l'arme ariere el cors poser,
Meesmement cel de Marie,
De qui il prist humaine vie.
Quant Jesus por nos mort sofri fol. 107v
E al .iii. jor resurrexi,
Plusors morz fist resusciter
A vis apareir e parler.
Dunc dut il bien sa mere e pot
Resusciter desque lui plot.
Deus a trestot en sa bailie,
Il a la mort, il a la vie,
Ciel e enfer e terre e mer.
Dunc pot il bien resusciter
Cele quil porta e norri
E plus l'ama e plus servi
Que hom ne feme en tot cest munt,
De toz cels qui esté i unt.
Jonas fu par sort mis en mer,
Quar en Ninive dut aler.
La baleine le trangloti,
.iii. jorz le tint, puis le rendi,
A terre le mist al tierz jor fol. 108r
Par la vertu Nostre Seignor.
.iii. enfanz ot a ardeir mis
En une fornaise toz vis.
Unques nuls d'els mal n'i senti,
Ne cuir ne char ne lor nerci,
Neïs chevel ne peil ne dras
N'i ot onques bruslé ne ars.
Si ert li feus ardanz entor
E il erent en la chalor.
Cil qui trestote char forma
E les enfanz el feu garda
E Jonan en la mer salva
E plusors morz resuscita
Bien pot dunques resusciter
Sa mere vive en ciel porter.
Or creun dunc comunement
Que tote est en ciel haltement,
Si depreun la gloriose, fol. 108v
La Sainte Virgene preciose,
Si veirement cum Deus l'ot chiere,
Que elle oie nostre preiere

And brought body and soul together,
Could easily resurrect the body
And place the soul back in the body,
Just as he did for Mary,
From whom he took on human life.
When Jesus suffered death for us
And was brought back to life again on the third day,
He resurrected several dead bodies,
Making them clearly alive and able to speak.
So it was his duty to his mother, and he was able to do so,
To resurrect her as soon as it pleased him.
God has everything in his power;
He has death and he has life,
Heaven and hell, and earth and sea.
So he could easily resurrect
The woman who carried him and nurtured him,
And loved him more and served him more,
Than any man or woman in the whole world,
Of all those who have been here.
Jonah was put to sea by lot,
For he had to go to Nineveh.
The whale swallowed him;
It held him for three days, then gave him back,
Placing him on land on the third day
Through the power of Our Lord.*
Three children had been set to be burnt
Alive in a furnace.
None of them ever felt any pain
And none of their skin or flesh was blackened.
Not a single hair on their head, or any of their clothing,
Was ever burnt or singed,
And around them was the burning fire
And they were in the heat.*
He who formed all flesh,
Preserved the children from the fire
Saved Jonah from the sea
And resurrected many who had died
Could therefore easily resurrect
His mother and take her to heaven alive.
Now let us all believe
That she is entirely in heaven on high,
And let us pray to the glorious one,
The precious Virgin Mary,
Just as in truth God held her dear,
That she should hear our prayer

E nos face la joie aveir
Que ueilz de chief ne pot veeir
Ne boche d'ome reconter
N'oreille oïr ne cuer penser,
Que Deus Nostre Sire a promis
En sun regne a ses amis;
Que Deus parçoniers nos en face
Par sa pité e par sa grace
E por l'amor sainte Marie.
Amen, amen, chascuns en die.

And cause us to have joy
Because the eyes in one's head cannot see,
Nor a man's mouth relate,
Nor one's ears hear or heart think
What Our Lord God has promised
To his friends in his kingdom;
May God make us his partners
In his pity and in his grace,
And for the love of the Virgin Mary.
Amen, amen, let each of us say it.

Incipits vary from manuscript to manuscript. For example, R has 'De la concepcion nostre dame sainte Marie' and J 'Cest de dieu et de sa mere'. See Ashford, ed., p. 3.

14. It is incorrect that the feast of the Conception was not celebrated before the time of William I. See Introduction, pp. 31–32.

19. The king of the Danes referred to is probably Svend (Swend, Swegen), who was king at the time of the Conquest. See Thurston, 'The Legend of Abbot Elsi', and Southern, 'The English Origins'.

42. Helsin (Ælfsige, Aelsi, Æthelsige, Ailsius, Alsi, Elsi, Elsinus), the sixth abbot of Ramsey, held the office from 1080 to 1087. He was an Englishman who had been a friend of both Edward the Confessor and Harold. The Benedictine abbey of Ramsey (or Ramsay) was founded in 969 by St Oswald, bishop of Worcester, as a result of a gift from Æthelwine, a local magnate. It was the earliest of the great religious houses of the Eastern Fenland and at its height had around eighty monks. It was home to a famous school and a great Library. It was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. Part of the abbey gatehouse survives, now forming part of Abbey College.

51–52. Two Latin versions of the Helsin story, e.g. that of William of Malmesbury and of an anonymous text originally attributed to St Anselm, have it that the Danish king was preparing a fleet to invade England and that Helsin was sent for the purpose of preventing him from going ahead with his plans. Wace's version says that Helsin was to make a peace offering and to find out when the fleet was leaving so that he could stop it (this would be the 'afaire' mentioned in v. 61).

59–60. In v. 59 Ashford emends T's reading 'A teis(?) i ot que il promist' to 'E tels i ot qui li promist'. His translation of vv. 59–60 ('And some there were to whom he (merely) made promises; / He made the army remain (at home), so much did he say to them') is similar to our own. Mancel and Trébutien, whose base manuscript is M, print vv. 59–60 as 'Et tel i ot qui li promist / L'ost remanoir, cil tant lor dist', which in a footnote they translate as 'Et tant leur en dit Helsin, qu'il y eut tel qui lui promit que l'armée resteroit en Danemarke' (p. 4). See Ashford's note to these lines.

84. This is the only example in Wace's works of the verb *galcrer* / *gaucrer* ('sail the sea, drift'), which also occurs in Old French and Anglo-Norman under the forms, *vagrer*, *vaucrer*, *walcrer*, *waucrer* etc. It is etymologically connected to English *walk*.

160. This description of a storm at sea, which beings in v. 65 and is broken up by the lengthy conversation between Helsin and the angel (vv. 101–46), constitutes the first of a number of passages in Wace that are concerned with sea-faring. Here, after Helsin and his men have set off from Denmark on their return journey to England, the sea begins to turns rough (v. 69) and Wace proceeds to give a dramatic account of waves swelling and darkness descending, leading even experienced sailors to lose all hope of survival. The *Nicholas* also contains a scene set at sea (vv. 381–438), in which sailors are visited by the goddess Diana and tricked into carrying a dangerous unguent until Nicholas intervenes. As was suggested above, Wace may have acquired his interest in nautical matters while a boy on the island of Jersey. He was clearly fascinated by the detail of ships and sailing. See in particular the passage in the *Roman de Brut* (vv. 11190–238) describing the embarkation of Arthur and his men for Gaul, and for a discussion of the vocabulary used in this passage, see William Sayers, 'Arthur's Embarkation for Gaul in a Fresh Translation of Wace's *Roman de Brut*'. On Wace's nautical vocabulary in general, see Keller, *Étude descriptive*, pp. 221–26, and Brian Woledge, 'Notes on Wace's Vocabulary', esp. p. 21. For a broader study, see Sayers, 'Old Norse Nautical Terminology in Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Verse'.

165. It is tempting to follow Ashford (p. 93) and interpret 'li' here as Mary, but many manuscripts have 'lui', which would indicate that the reference is to Helsin (MSS RNBQVCAMZ and J). In addition, SBQZ and J have 'par' which reinforces the meaning of 'through him' (i.e. 'through his efforts').

178–83. The line references following the folio number indicate the line on the folio where MS T leaves off when lines are supplied by another manuscript and then where T resumes. Lines 179–82 are supplied by A.

190. Sepphoris, now in ruins, was an important Roman and Byzantine city about two miles from Nazareth in western Lower Galilee. However, all manuscripts of the *CND* collated by Ashford, except his base manuscript T, indicate that Anna was born in Bethlehem (p. 12). Ashford states that he retained the minority reading 'Saforie' based on the legend that placed Anna and Joachim's home in Sepphoris (pp. 93–94 n. 190). On the Latin textual precedents for this attribution to Sepphoris as Mary's birthplace,

see also Beyers (p. 370 n. 36). The origin of the attribution is unknown, but it was apparently circulating in the West from the twelfth century.

212. As the vow was made in respect of either a son or a daughter, one would expect 'le' rather than 'la' in this line.

222. The Festival of Lights or Dedication is also known as Hanukkah or the Feast of the Maccabees. It is celebrated for eight nights, starting on the 25th of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, in order to celebrate the dedication of the new altar at the Temple in Jerusalem. The festival was established in 165 BC by Judas Maccabeus, his brothers and the elders of the congregation of Israel.

233–34. The original Issachar/Yissachar (Isacar in Wace's text) was the ninth son of Jacob and the fifth son of Leah (Genesis 30:18); he gave his name to the Israelite tribe of Issachar. The earliest occurrence of the story of Issachar's refusal to accept Joachim's offering may be that found in the *Protevangelium of James* (where he is called Reuben; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 57).

275–80. These lines are supplied by MS R.

360. Isaac was born to Abraham's wife Sarah when she had passed normal child-bearing age. When God told her that she would have a child, she laughed. Isaac was Sarah's only child. His father, Abraham, who was one hundred years old at the time of his birth, had had another son, Ishmael, thirteen years earlier (Genesis 18:10–14). Wace later specifies that Sarah was eighty years old when she conceived (vv. 515–16). Rachel was the favourite wife of Jacob. In Genesis 30:31 she is said to be barren, whereas her sister Leah bore Jacob several sons, which made her jealous. Eventually Rachel did conceive, giving birth to Joseph and later, after she and Jacob had arrived in Canaan, to Benjamin (Genesis 29:31–35; 30:1–2, 22–24; 35:16–18). Wace later tells us that Rachel was the daughter of Laban and wife of Israel (Jacob is renamed 'Israel', Genesis 32:28–29, 35:10), and that Joseph was a most worthy man who as lord of Egypt saved the people from famine (vv. 517–22). At the beginning of the book of Samuel, Hannah, one of the two wives of Elkanah, is barren and childless. She prays for a child, and a priest named Eli, who overhears her promise her child to God, blesses her. She then conceives, bearing Samuel (I Samuel: 1–21). Samson's birth is related in Judges 13. His father's name is Manoah, but his mother's name is not given. Both parents were aged, and the mother remained barren until she was visited by an angel of the Lord, who told her she would conceive and bear a son.

484. On the birth of Isaac, see the note to v. 360 above.

522. On Sarah and Rachel as barren women who conceived late in life, see the note to v. 360 above.

550. Along with the first message from the angel and Anna's answer (vv. 497–504), the image of the two men clad in white garments, who announce to Anna Joachim's return home from the desert (vv. 549–54), are part of the version in the *Protevangelium*, whereas the second message from the angel comes from the *De Nativitate* (IV) (Beyers, p. 373 n. 39).

622. Lines 619–22 would seem to be a question, but there is no question mark in Ashford's text.

658. Ashford has the form 'gardner' here', which we assume is an error. We emend to 'garder'.

716. The book of Isaiah recounts a number of Isaiah's prophecies, including his prediction that Jesus would be born of a virgin (7:14) and be preceded by a messenger (40:1–5, 9). In the culture of the Israelites the rod was a symbol with power and authority, as it was the tool used by a shepherd to guide his flock. In the Bible rods are particularly associated with Moses and Aaron (see below, vv. 1011–18). Of the numerous biblical passages, see for example Exodus 14:16; Numbers 17:1–13; Isaiah 11:1.

724. On Jesse as the father of David, who became king of the nation of Israel, see I Chronicles: 29:26; II Samuel 23:1. Jesse is also famous for his role in the genealogy of Jesus. Isaiah 11:1 reads: 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots'. The Tree of Jesse was portrayed from the eleventh century in manuscripts, religious illuminations, wall paintings etc. Normally a recumbent Jesse has a tree rising from his body with the ancestors of Jesus portrayed in its branches and Jesus at the summit.

825. In this line and in v. 828 the verb *parler* is apparently used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. In vv. 832 and 959 the verb *tochier* is similarly used, as is *aler a home* in v. 834. See also the use of *adeser* and *baillier* in v. 960. In v. 969 Wace uses the term *fornicacion* to describe what Joseph considers to be illicit sexual activity.

881–84. In Luke 1:34–36 Mary asks the angel Gabriel how she can conceive a child, as she is a virgin. He refers to her cousin Elizabeth, telling her that she had conceived a child in her old age. Mary immediately leaves her home in Nazareth and goes to Elizabeth's home in Judaea. Wace's comment in vv. 905–07 (and later in vv. 908–10) that Elizabeth's baby, the

future John the Baptist, stirred in her womb when he heard Mary's greeting is found in Luke 1:41, 44. Like the women referred to above in the note to v. 360 Elizabeth was childless by the time she reached the menopause and the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him that Elizabeth would give birth to a child who should be called John (Luke 1:11–13).

1093–110. On this passage, see Paradisi, 'Remarques sur l'exégèse onomastique et étymologique', esp. pp. 149–50.

1136. In the family tree known as the Holy Kinship, whose kernel is found in the earliest forms of the *trinubium Annae*, Esmeria (Emeria, Hesmeria) was Anne's sister and the mother of Elizabeth. In Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (*Legenda aurea*), originally compiled around the middle of the thirteenth century, Anne was not only the Virgin Mary's mother, and thus maternal grandmother to Jesus, but she was also grandmother to five of the twelve apostles: John the Evangelist, James the Greater, James the Less, Simon and Jude. Wace does not name Simon and Jude in this family (as sons of Mary's half-sister Mary Cleophas, seen later in the *Golden Legend*). In Wace the apostles John the Evangelist, James the Greater and James the Less (along with John the Baptist and Joseph) are seen as cousins to Jesus. See the genealogy of the three Marys, daughters of St Anne, as presented by Wace (Appendix, p. 363).

1160. Mary, the wife of Cleophas (or Clopas), is mentioned in the gospel of St John (19:25) as standing by the cross of Jesus. The identification of this Mary and of Cleophas causes some difficulty. Cleophas's name is often said to be a transliteration of the Aramaic Alphaeus. This Mary has been identified as the mother of James the Less (Mark 15:40) and Cleophas, James's father, is identified as Alphaeus (Mark 3:18). See *Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. Cleophas. In Luke 6:15 the disciple James is referred to as the son of Alph(a)eus. See Introduction, pp. 36–38 and p. 38 n. 46.

1163–1200. These lines are supplied by MS A. See Introduction, pp. 37–38.

1196. John the Evangelist, here identified as son of Zebedee and Mary Salome and brother to James the Greater, was one of the original disciples (Mark 3:17) and the only one to live into old age and not die for his faith. He is identified as the author of the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John. See Introduction, pp. 38–40.

1258. This passage on the virtues of virginity (vv. 1231–58) does not correspond with Wace's source for this section of his work. See Introduction, p. 38 and n. 47. Throughout his poem Wace refers regularly to the

concepts of chastity and virginity: *chasteé* (vv. 622, 826, 1243); *virgene* (vv. 377, 595, 598, 604, 613, 633, 637, 644, 650, 685, 734, 746, 758, 793, 812, 813, 819, 822, 995, 1009, 1026, 1034, 1043, 1044 twice, 1945 twice, 1046 twice, 1047, 1048, 1053 twice, 1227, 1228 twice, 1230 twice, 1291, 1325, 1490, 1500, 1557, 1589, 1596 twice, 1798); *virginité* (vv. 658, 810, 829, 1035, 1043, 1202, 1204, 1233, 1255, 1257); *virginalement* (v. 1200). John Bugge states that that virginity is 'the single most essential prerequisite for a life of perfection in Christianity' (*Virginitas*, p. 1). Simon Gaunt points out that 'medieval culture was obsessed with virginity', which had social as well as religious value (*Gender and Genre*, pp. 185, 193).

1262. The term *chamberier* literally denotes someone who attends to the bedchamber. The sense here seems to be somewhat broader: 'servant, guardian'.

1288. For the location of the house where John lodged Mary during her last days MSS TRBLE have 'Mont-en-Sion' (Mount Zion), and CXOAPJV and Royal 2 A.IX have 'munt/mont olivet' (Mount of Olives) (SM 'm. dolivete'). See Beyers, p. 391 n. 91, and Ashford, ed., p. 63.

1340. Wace follows the *Pseudo-Melito* in saying that the Virgin prayed on the Mount of Olives and that her tomb was situated to the 'right' of the city (presumably to the east) in the valley of Josaphat / Jehoshaphat (Beyers, p. 391 and n. 91). *Transitus W* also situates the tomb on the right-hand side of Jerusalem; see Clayton on the geographic variations found in the Latin tradition regarding the placement of Mary's tomb (*The Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 80–82).

1396. MSS TRNBJE have 'Mont-en-Syon' (Mount Zion) and CVAPMKXOVSL have 'iosaphas'. See Beyers, p. 391 n. 91, and Ashford, ed., p. 70.

1472. On the sudden arrival of the apostles, see Introduction, pp. 42–43.

1485. Tierce was the third hour of the day (about 9.00 am).

1545. Only MS T contains vv. 1545–52, where Mount Zion ('Mont-en-Syon') is offered as the location of the Assumption, referring to 'li anciën' (Armenian, Greek and Syrian) as sources (Ashford, ed., p. 78). Beyers notes that T is also the only manuscript to have 'Saforie' as Anna's birthplace (p. 391 n. 91).

1560. The task of washing a dead body was performed by women. See Danièle Alexandre-Bidon, *La Mort au Moyen Age*, pp. 76–77, 109–10.

1602. Wace's source for the discussion between John and Peter concerning who should carry the branch before the bier is found in the *Pseudo-Melito* (*B*[1], ed. Tischendorf, *Transitus Mariae B*, X, pp. 130–31).

1608. This is the opening verse of Psalm 113 (NRSV 114), which reads: 'When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language'.

1714. On the hostility of the Jews (vv. 1631–714) towards Mary and the procession bearing her coffin, see Introduction, pp. 43–44.

1717–18. The valley of Josaphat is mentioned only once in the Bible: Joel 3:2. Since the fourth century AD this valley has become a general designation for the Kidron Valley, which is situated between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It is often believed by Christians that the reference in the book of Joel indicates that it is in this valley that the Last Judgement will be held. See also v. 1734 and the note to v. 1340.

1733. Ashford states that he has retained the form 'parest', only found in T, 'on the chance that it comes from *parestre*, although this verb does not seem to be recorded' (p. 95). However, in the *Life of Saint John the Almsgiver* there is an example of the verb *parestre* that is translated by the editor as 'be completely' (vol. 2, p. 88): 'De feves unt auches semblant, / Mes ne parsunt tels nepurquant' ('They are somewhat like beans, / But yet not completely so', ed. Kenneth Urwin, vv. 4839–40). But in the context of v. 1733 the readings from MSS A 'aparoit' and MPNBVS 'apert' ('appear, be apparent / evident') seem more plausible and thus we translate the line as 'still visible and still surviving'.

1775–80. Instead of going to Nineveh, as God had ordered him to do, Jonah, a prophet from the nothern kingdom of Israel around the eighth century BC, goes to Jaffa and then sets sail for Tarshish. During a huge storm, the sailors cast lots to discover who has caused the storm and learn that it is Jonah. He tells them that if he is thrown overboard the storm will cease. Unable to get the ship ashore, the sailors do throw him overboard and the sea calms. Jonah is saved by a great fish sent by God; he spends three days and three nights within it. He prays to, and makes commitments, to God, who orders the fish to vomit Jonah out (Jonah 1 and 2). Matthew in his gospel equates Jonah's three days and three nights in the fish's belly with Jesus's period of three days and nights in the heart of the earth (12:40).

1781–88. The reference here is presumably to God's rescue from the furnace of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego (Daniel 3:12–28).

LIFE OF ST MARGARET

INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts and Editions

Wace's *Life of St Margaret* (*La Vie de sainte Marguerite*) is preserved in three manuscripts:

1. **M** Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, 927, f. 205r–216v. Second quarter of the thirteenth century. Southern French copy of an Anglo-Norman original. Beginning lost. Also contains the *Conception Nostre Dame* (MS T).
2. **A** Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3516, f. 125r–126v. Probably completed in 1267 or 1268 and could have been copied at Hesdin, at the court of the counts of Artois. Picard. Also contains the *Life of St Nicholas* (MS A) and parts of the *Conception Nostre Dame* (MS X).
3. **T** Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1905, f. 155v–175v. Early fourteenth century. Copied in north-eastern France (probably at the court of Jeanne of Burgundy).

The text was first published in 1878 by Aristide Joly. His edition was based on MS M, the only manuscript known to him.[1] In 1932 Elizabeth A. Francis published facing-page editions of AM, with variants from T, together with the putative Latin source text. Hans-Erich Keller's 1990 edition provides synoptic diplomatic editions of the three manuscripts followed by his reconstruction of the original text as he surmised it might have appeared (pp. 98–115).[2] It is this reconstructed version that is reproduced and translated in the present volume. The poem has not previously been translated.

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[1] Joly's edition contains many inaccuracies. See the review by Paul Meyer, *Romania*, 8 (1879), 275–76.

[2] Synoptic diplomatic editions provide side-by-side editions of each manuscript, with minimal editorial intervention. Keller sets M on the left-hand pages with A and T on the right, indicating his emendations to each manuscript in the footer immediately below.

The Manuscript Tradition

The decisions by Francis and Keller to edit each manuscript separately were probably motivated in large part by the independent nature of the copies, which present substantial variations and whose relationships are unclear. Keller believed AT to be derived from a lost Picard manuscript, which was itself a modernisation of another Picard manuscript, now also lost. The latter, a copy of Wace's original text, also served as a model for M (Keller, ed., pp. 28–36).

In view of the fact that these manuscripts represent very different and seemingly independent versions of Wace's original text, it is impossible to select a single satisfactory base manuscript. M appears to be the oldest manuscript, but it does not begin until v. 253 of the text (Keller's line-numbering) and thereafter lacks a further substantial passage (vv. 291–362) and several individual lines (vv. 266, 268, 372, 378). In A, which contains a large number of Picardisms, two substantial passages (vv. 225–48 and vv. 275–96) are missing, as the lower part of folio 125 is damaged. In addition, several lines found in M are absent from A (vv. 441–42, 471–72, 589–90, 603–06, 624, 626, 629–30, 687–92, 703–04). The latter comes to an end at v. 718, whereas M has 30 further lines and T 24 lines. There is thus no mention in A of the role of Theodimus in the preservation of the story. Francis states that A contains a number of errors (ed., p. xx) and Keller that it represents a fairly radical revision of Wace's work (ed., p. 97).

As there are clear-cut resemblances between them, AT must belong to the same family. But such are the differences between M and AT that either the scribe of M made frequent additions to the original or the predecessor of the scribes of AT suppressed a large number of lines from his source. It seems likely that this scribal predecessor came from the north of France and used the Franco-Picard literary language, thus rewriting Wace's Norman dialect. This *remaniement* of Wace's original also includes the rejection of words thought to be old-fashioned. The revised version was then further modified by the scribes of AT. The former rectified a number of lines he presumably did not understand and was also guilty of carelessness, and the latter made changes aimed at modernising the form of the text. T retains lines from the original it shares with M. Given the nature of the three extant witnesses to Wace's poem, it is possible to conclude that M, if complete, would have provided the version closest to the original; its epilogue, which provides Wace's name, albeit in the form *grace*, and also outlines the role of Theodimus, can be accepted as authentic. However, it is easy to understand Keller's conviction that a

reconstructed version of Wace's poem was required, in order to demonstrate how it could have been composed (ed., p. 97). Keller's version is based, wherever possible, on M, and, in cases where M is defective, on T (see Notes to Keller's Text below).[3]

Author, Date, Patronage

Of the three extant manuscripts of the *Life of St Margaret*, none indicates a specific patron and only M provides the author's name, in the form *grace* ('Ci faut sa vie ce dit Grace' / 'Here ends her Life, this says Wace', v. 742, ed., Keller, p. 94). This is also the form the name takes in the last line of Part II of the *Roman de Rou*, where it is certainly an error for Guace (=Wace) ('Volentiers preïst grace, quer de prendre a mes*tier*' / 'Wace would gladly accept bounty, for he needs to take something', v. 4425, ed. Holden, trans. Burgess). The form *grace* also occurs in MS T of the *Margaret*, but in this case the meaning of the term is 'grace' ('*Et* celui doint la siue grace / *Que* de latin an roman mit' / 'And may he [God] give his grace to him / Who translated it from Latin into French', vv. 742–43, ed. Keller, p. 95). The phrasing of the signatures in Wace's other hagiographic works strengthens the argument for attributing all three to the same author. With its use of both 'grace' and 'Gace' the first couplet of the *Conception Nostre Dame* ('El nom Dé, qui nos doingt sa grace, / Oëz que nous dist maistre Gace') seemingly combines the readings of MSS MT of the *Margaret*. The *Life of St Nicholas* concludes with a reference to translation that parallels the wording of both these manuscripts of the *Margaret*: 'Ci falt le livre mestre Guace / Qu'il ad de seint Nicholas feit, / De latin en romanz estreit' (vv. 1546–48).

Although Wace's interventions within the narrative of the *Margaret* are neither extensive nor thematically original, they do convey a distinct authorial voice. His comments serve to express his love and veneration of both God and the martyr, to encourage his audience to do likewise and above all to affirm his and his text's authority. He establishes the authority of Margaret's Life predominantly by implication, thereby maintaining a delicate balance between confidence and humility. Rather than asserting the value of his work, he asks for God's succour in writing (v. 1). He leaves

[3] For further details concerning the manuscripts and the manuscript tradition, see Francis, ed., pp. xx–xxv, Keller, ed., pp. 21–36, Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 12, and Blacker and Burgess, *Wace: A Critical Bibliography*, pp. 1–2.

the theological lessons to Margaret, citing her prayers directly, but he demonstrates his secular knowledge by providing confident explanations of the saint's name and later of an implement of torture, the 'cheval fust' (vv. 11–14, 523–24). Conversely, by claiming ignorance of an unimportant detail (v. 584), he implies that he knows all the essential facts (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 28; see also above, Introduction to the *Conception Nostre Dame*, p. 48 n. 63 and Peter Damian-Grint, 'Truth, Trust, and Evidence', pp. 74–75). Throughout the text, he suggests an interest in the historicity of the narrative that is unusually pronounced for such a short vernacular saint's Life. He not only cites a written source (v. 67), as is common, but also draws substantial attention to the role of eyewitnesses in the preservation of the story (vv. 297–304, 723–24, 739–40).[4] Although other hagiographers make similar efforts to prove the direct lineage between an eyewitness account and their own text, in Wace's narrative inventions the greater emphasis on historicity than on the praise of God is distinctive.

There is no sure evidence to assist with a precise dating of Wace's three hagiographical poems. Keller dates the *Margaret* to the period between 1130 and 1140 (p. 40) and the common conclusion of scholars is that the *Margaret* is the earliest of the three works. It may be significant for the dating of the *Margaret* that Wace does not yet refer to himself as *maistre*, as he does in the other two texts. In the opinion of a number of scholars, the *Margaret* is the simplest of Wace's three religious poems (Einar Ronsjö, ed., p. 21; Francis, ed., pp. xiv, xvi, xx; Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 29). For all three poems we are presumably dealing with the period when Wace was a *clerc lisant* in Caen (see above, p. 2). As we have seen, the *Conception* was also probably composed between 1130 and 1140, roughly contemporaneous with Bernard of Clairvaux's rigorous opposition to efforts to establish the Feast of the Conception; so the *Margaret* would have been completed by 1140, and possibly some time before that date.

Outline of the Story

The story will be about a virgin who is unable to withdraw her heart from the service of God. Her name is Margaret, an appropriate name because she was a precious gem and just like the pearl after which she was named. Born into a noble family in Antioch, she is the daughter of Theodosius, a

[4] For a discussion of the importance of eyewitness accounts in vernacular historical writing, see Damian-Grint, *New Historians*, pp. 72–73, 198–99.

priest of the pagan temple and a patriarch. One of very few Christians at the time, she rejects her father's beliefs and is filled with the Holy Ghost. Her father sends her to a place near Antioch and entrusts her to a nurse, who loves her dearly. While she is still a small child, her mother dies. Because of her Christian beliefs, her father hates her and disinherits her. Her reward will come from God.

When she is fifteen years old, she vows to God that she will remain chaste, even though this is a time of great persecution of Christians. She goes to tend sheep, but one day is spotted by Olybrius, the prefect of Rome. He falls in love with her and sends knights to tell her that, if she is a free woman, he will marry her; if not, he will take her as his concubine. She rejects this offer, praying to God that her faith will not be harmed or her soul besmirched. Angered by her rejection, Olybrius has her brought to him and questions her about her identity and her faith, threatening her with torture and death if she does not abandon her beliefs. He gives her a second chance to give up her beliefs and love him, and the onlookers question the advantage she is gaining from her refusal. She replies at some length, re-affirming her beliefs and criticising her tormentors. She calls Olybrius a dog and claims that he has placed his powers at the service of devils.

Angry, the prefect orders further torture. The onlookers are horrified by the blood that spills from Margaret's tender flesh. Olybrius gives her yet another chance, asking her to worship his gods and thus avoid death. To this she retorts that her soul would enter a burning fire. So severe is the torture that follows that her entrails hang out through her wounds. She is then imprisoned and prays to God, asking him to help her to drive out the Enemy, who is waging war on her. One day a dragon, black and horrible in appearance and with fire spewing forth from its nose, suddenly emerges from a corner. Although frightened, Margaret maintains her faith and prays to God. The dragon is a devil in disguise and it almost swallows her up completely. But she is armed with the holy cross, which grows inside the dragon and causes it to burst, thus allowing her to escape.

But Margaret's troubles are not over. She soon catches sight of another devil, with its hands, feet and knees tightly bound. This turns out to be the brother of the earlier devil and he tells her that his name is Beelzebub and his brother's name Rufo. Beelzebub soon realises that he has been defeated and asks Margaret to spare him. But she pushes him down to the ground and holds him there with her foot. A good deal of dialogue ensues between Margaret and the devil, during which time she releases her foot a little to allow him to breathe. He is ashamed to have been vanquished by a maiden and tells her about his king, Satan (formerly called Lucifer in

heaven). When she again makes the sign of the cross, the ground opens and the devil falls in.

The next day Margaret is again taken before Olybrius and he makes another attempt to convince her to renounce her faith. When she refuses, in his anger he has her stripped and placed on a wooden horse, an instrument of torture on which the victim sits astride with burning firebrands all around. Margaret prays to God and the fire is extinguished without her experiencing any pain. Then Olybrius has her head plunged into a vat full of water. She prays to God again. Her bonds are broken and she emerges from the water. Then a dove comes to her and tells her that the company of heaven awaits her. As a result, more than five thousand men, and also women and children, are converted. Olybrius has them taken to Armenia and beheaded. Their blood, says Wace, acts as a form of baptism.

Unable to overcome the maiden in any other way, Olybrius orders her beheading. Her executioner, Malcus, asks her to beseech God to take pity on him. He allows her to pray before she is executed. Giving thanks to God, she states that she is a virgin pure and unsullied and asks him to help those who hear about her life or who give money to support the Church in one way or another. God, she says, should help women in labour and respond to those who seek pardon from him in her name. A terrible clap of thunder is then heard. A dove settles on her and tells her that God has granted that she should come to paradise and receive the reward for her suffering. All those who pray to you, says the dove, will receive pardon for their sins. Margaret then tells the executioner to strike the blow that will behead her, and with great reluctance he does so before falling dead himself. From heaven come angels, singing, and the sick who touch her return home well. A dove emerges from her body and ascends to heaven.

Margaret's body is taken by a man named Theodimus, who had visited her in prison. He writes down an account of her prayers and her suffering. Wace says that everyone should now pray to God for love of St Margaret and let her obtain pardon for our sins. He adds that he has translated Theodimus's account into the vernacular.

Structure

The narrative can be divided into the following sections:

1–18	Prologue; Margaret's devotion; the meaning of her name
19–80	Her family and her father's hatred of her beliefs; the persecution of Christians

81–192	Olybrius's love for her; her rejection of him; torture by beating with rods
193–278	Her re-affirmation of her faith; her castigation of Olybrius and his people; further torture
279–340	The dragon's attack; Margaret's escape by means of prayers and the sign of the cross
341–506	The appearance and defeat of Beelzebub; the devil's confession of tactics
507–40	Torture with a wooden horse and firebrands; miraculous resistance
541–90	Torture by water; visitation of a heavenly dove; Margaret freed; conversion and execution of five thousand onlookers
591–719	Margaret's execution ordered; the reluctant executioner Malcus; second visitation of a dove; Margaret beheaded; death of Malcus; a third dove emerges from Margaret's body and flies up to heaven
720–44	Epilogue; Theodimus, an eyewitness, is named as the author of the source; Wace translated the Latin into French

Following the structure of the main Latin versions of Margaret's Life, the narrative consists of a number of episodes which, as Morgan J. Desmond has shown ('The Concept of Narrative'), Wace weaves together, and by so doing creates more continuity than we find in the Mombritius version of the story (*Biblioteca hagiographica latina*, no. 5303; see below). Scholars have organised these episodes into differing structural frameworks. Edward Montgomery sees the work as comprising two main parts, with the second half reversing the episodes of the first half ('Structure and Symbol', p. 304); he further divides each half into four sections. In contrast to these eight sections and Le Saux's three phases (*Companion*, pp. 18–24), Keller identifies seven parts in the text, which he intentionally lays out in the form of a gothic arch (p. 41). In spite of these different divisions, all three scholars agree on the symmetry of the Life's episodes, which frame the central encounter with the dragon.

Sources and their Treatment

The comparison between Wace's text and its Latin source is a delicate matter since we do not have original textual witnesses for either work. The earliest manuscript copy of the *Margaret* was made a century after Wace composed the poem and the extant manuscripts attest to the substantial

changes undergone by saints' Lives from one copy to the next. No copy of any Latin *passio* has been shown to be a direct source for Wace's translation.[5]

Most scholars agree that Wace used the version identified by the Bollandists as *Biblioteca hagiographica latina* (hereafter *BHL*), no. 5303 (commonly known as the Mombritius *passio*,[6] since it was edited by Boninus Mombritius in 1479) as his main source. The Bollandists list numerous manuscripts of this version, including nearly thirty that were copied before Wace composed his work. Basing his analysis on a detailed comparison of the Mombritius edition with just three manuscripts of *BHL* 5303 that were not used by Mombritius, Gordon Gerould concludes that the differences among them 'are not simply variant readings, but are more deep-seated' ('A New Text', p. 526 n. 3). Among the multiple variations he identifies, Gerould lists numerous cases where one or more of the manuscripts omit one or more complete sentences, including some of the saint's full speeches and prayers (pp. 537–46). Since Gerould's study, no edition has been published to rectify this problem.[7] Without an edition that shows the range of readings preserved in the copies of the *BHL* 5303 *passio*, there is no sure way either of identifying the specific Latin source of any vernacular Life of St Margaret or of determining how the vernacular translator adapted his or her material.

Despite these challenges, a number of scholars have attempted to analyse Wace's treatment of his putative Latin source or sources. To this end Francis published, along with her edition of Wace's *Margaret*, a composite transcription of two manuscripts that belong to the *BHL* 5303 family. Since MS Paris, BNF, lat. 17002, which dates from the tenth century, has a conclusion that differs substantially from the final 130 lines of Wace's poem, Francis substituted the conclusion of MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. misc. 230, dating from 1204 (pp. xxxi–xxxii). She claims

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[5] Marie-Geneviève Grossel incorrectly states that we possess the Latin text from which Wace worked and also know the second manuscript he used ('Wace, traducteur de vies de saint', p. 202).

[6] Following common usage, *passio* here refers to a Latin account of the martyr's violent death, whereas 'passion' signifies the death as an event or series of events.

[7] Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis (*The Old English Lives of St Margare*t, pp. 7–40) provide a rich and careful study of the Latin texts, especially the *BHL* 5303 version, which is helpful for evaluating variations between Wace's *Margaret* and the Latin tradition, although it does not provide enough detail to allow more conclusive statements about the relationship between Wace's text and any potential source.

that Wace also drew elements from another version, which she designates as the Caligula version, after MS London, British Library, Cotton Caligula, A.VIII (*BHL*, no. 5306, the earliest copy of which dates to the eleventh century). The most important of these additions is the request that Margaret makes in her final prayer on behalf of women in childbirth who invoke her name (Francis, ed., pp. vii–viii; 'A Hitherto Unprinted Version', pp. 87–97). The only evidence Francis provides in support of her view that Wace did not use a Latin text combining the two versions is that he sometimes translates the *BHL* 5303 version word for word. However, we might just as easily surmise that a Latin author reproduced the *BHL* 5303 version, incorporating the few added details from a Caligula-family manuscript.

Subsequent analyses of the differences between Wace and his source have been based either on Mombritius alone or on Francis's composite edition, and also on her assertion that Wace combined the two Latin works. Among them, Keller argues that Wace reshaped the text in order to make the work more symmetrical, a process which, he claims, was 'certainement un fruit des études du trivium de notre auteur', ('surely the fruit of our author's study of the *trivium*', p. 41). He adds that it is more dramatic, thus altering the tone to create a narrative voice that emphasises realistic details of the saint's life (pp. 36–37, 40–49). In contrast, Le Saux maintains that Wace eliminates the judicial realism of the *passio*, which moves from trial to torture and finally to execution, and substitutes for it a different narrative logic that stresses the saint's interior progression. She also provides a detailed comparison of the speech acts in Wace and in Francis's version of Mombritius, concluding that Wace has made the direct discourse much more dramatic and less didactic (*Companion*, pp. 16–29). Desmond concentrates on the structural differences between the Latin version and Wace's rendition, arguing that while Wace strengthens the narrative, causal and horizontal logic of the story, the Latin presents a vertical logic whereby 'the significance of any given deed resides more in its manifestation of some aspect of [a transcendent] theme than in the deed itself or in its "horizontal" relationship to preceding or following events' (p. 32). He further examines Wace's efforts to turn type characters into individuals by alluding to their interior experiences (pp. 44–54). Diane Mockridge and, subsequently, Laurie Postlewate emphasise the affective differences between the Latin version and Wace's version. Whereas the former presents God as a fearsome commander and the saint as his soldier, the latter depicts a mystical, loving relationship between bridegroom

and bride.[8] However, any claims regarding Wace's transformation of his source will remain purely conjectural until we have an edition that shows a more complete picture of the variations among the Latin manuscripts.

The Cult of St Margaret

The origins of Margaret's cult remain a mystery. Not only does she appear with different names (Margaret and Marina) and different places of origin (Antioch in Pisidia and Antioch on the Orontes), she even turns up on different dates in the calendar (primarily 17 and 20 July, but also 18 June and 7, 13 and 18 July).[9]

Since the seventeenth-century Bollandists, scholars generally agree that very early on in the East there may have been a cult of St Marina of Pisidian Antioch, a virgin martyr, who suffered at the hands of Olybrius in the Great Persecution of the early fourth century and who overcame a dragon. When the legend and cult passed into the Latin West, the saint acquired the name Margaret. The earliest western evidence for the saint's cult may date back to the sixth century, but she only became widely popular in the twelfth and particularly the thirteenth centuries. Her feast, according to the *Acta sanctorum* (hereafter *AASS*), is 17 July in the East and 20 July in the West (July V, pp. 24–45).

Western hagiographers and other scholars, from at least the thirteenth century, have increasingly called into question certain aspects of the saint's story.[10] In the *Legenda aurea* Jacobus de Voragine famously calls the episode of the dragon 'worthless' ('friuolum', p. 618). The Bollandists describe aspects of the Acts as 'silly and ridiculous . . . foolish and deceitful . . . entirely foolish' ('Ineptos ac ridiculos . . . absurda & falsa . . . Absurdissima', *AASS* July V, p. 31). Paul Meyer denounced the story as 'one of the most despicable fabrications of ancient hagiography'.[11] Finally,

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[8] Mockridge bases her comparison on the Mombritius version of Margaret's *passio* ('From Christ's Soldier to his Bride', pp. 102–49), while Postlewate seems to use Francis's composite edition, which she mistakenly identifies as Mombritius ('Vernacular Hagiography and Lay Piety', p. 116 n. 3).

[9] Clayton and Magennis, pp. 72–75; Guido Tammi, *Due versioni della legenda di S. Margherita d'Antiocha*, pp. 66–69.

[10] Earlier, Metaphrastes may have criticised parts of the legend in a tenth-century Greek version, while other versions conveyed a much more restrained account than the most popular renditions, without explicitly questioning their sources (Clayton and Magennis, p. 4 n. 4 and p. 19).

[11] Meyer, 'Deux anciens manuscrits', p. 19 (cited in Keller, ed., p. 13 n. 32).

as part of the revisions to the Roman Calendar ensuing from the Second Vatican Council, St Margaret's feast was effectively abolished in 1969. The Sacred Congregation of Rites determined that the Acts of Margaret's life were 'entirely legendary' ('Omnino . . . fabulosa', *Calendarium romanum*, p. 30).[12] In spite of this decision, the saint's feast continues to appear in the *Martyrologium romanum*, albeit with some hesitation, as it was published under Pope John Paul II in 2001 and reissued in 2004: 'At Antioch in Pisidia, [the feast] of Saint Marina or Margaret, who is said to have dedicated her body, through virginity and martyrdom, to Christ' ('Antiochíæ in Pisídia, sanctæ Marínæ seu Margarítæ, quæ virginitáte et martýrio corpus suum Christo dedicásse tráditur', *Martyrologium romanum*, p. 380).

Despite the probably unprovable origins of Margaret's legend, the desire persists to create a continuous narrative of the saint's cult, and one that begins as early as possible.[13] The earliest verifiable evidence for the veneration of a St Margaret, however, only seems to date to the ninth century. The list of early documents in which she does *not* appear, as Margaret or as Marina, is telling: among them are the oldest Syriac martyrology (412 or slightly earlier),[14] the Hieronymian Martyrology (592–600), St Willibrord's Calendar (658–739),[15] the *Parvum romanum* (8th century),[16] Bede's Martyrology (8th century)[17] and Usuard's Martyrology (863–69).[18] Margaret's feast was added to a number of early manuscripts after they were first written, including copies of Usuard's and Bede's martyrologies

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[12] In removing saints from the calendar, the Vatican was careful to avoid labelling the saints themselves as fictitious (p. 68), and individual churches could petition to retain the feasts of those saints who were traditionally associated with them (p. 5). However, the emphatic denunciation of Margaret's Acts leaves little room to petition for her memorial. Note the case of St Christopher, concerning whom the *Roman Calendar* states: 'The memorial of Christopher, which entered the Roman calendar in 1550, is not part of the ancient Roman tradition. It is now left to particular calendars. Although the Acts of the life of Christopher are legendary, the existence of his cult is very old' (p. 86).

[13] Caesar Baronius seems to be the source of the belief that there is sixth-century evidence for Margaret's cult: 'Vetus fuit in Ecclesia Occidentali etiam huius sanctæ martyris cultus, in antiquis enim litaniis Rom. Ecclesiæ, quæ et positæ habentur in Ordine Romano, inter alias sanctas virgines et martyres hæc recensetur' (*Martyrologium*, p. 351, cited in Tammi, p. 66 n. 3). The authors of the *AASS* are somewhat sceptical of this claim, saying that Baronius does not provide evidence ('De S. Margarita seu Marina Virg. et Mart.', *AASS* July V, p. 26). Keller (ed., p. 8) and Félix Soleil (*La Vierge Marguerite*, p. 1) cite Baronius without qualification; Tammi (p. 66) is more cautious.

[14] W. Wright, 'An Ancient Syrian Martyrology', pp. 45–56, 423–32.

[15] Clayton and Magennis, pp. 72–73.

[16] Tammi, p. 66.

[17] Clayton and Magennis, p. 72.

[18] Tammi, citing Migne (*Patrologia Latina* [hereafter *PL*], vol. 124, 20 July), notes that Margaret was added to Usuard's martyrology in the margin next to 20 July (p. 57 n. 4).

(Tammi, p. 57 n. 4), but this probably reflects her later popularity. More work needs to be done with regard to the date of the later additions.[19] Such an absence strongly indicates that the cult only emerged four or five hundred years after the saint is supposed to have lived. Whereas evidence for the historical existence of a number of early martyrs survives, Margaret is one of the many very popular saints—others include Catherine and Christopher—who were unknown, and in fact undocumented, until well into the Middle Ages.

Margaret's name first appears in ninth-century litanies (from ca. 840 and later), and the first known account of her life, under the name of Margaret, occurs in Hrabanus Maurus's contemporary *Martyrologium* (840–54).[20] At that time Margaret and Marina appear to have had independent cults. Hrabanus offers almost identical accounts of the two saints, Marina on 18 June and Margaret on 13 July:

> On the same day at Antioch is celebrated the passion of the virgin Marina, who through the prefect Olibrius suffered many torments for the name of Christ, fetters, imprisonments, scourgings and the rack. The devil tested her in the form of a dragon and similarly of an Ethiopian, and wished to destroy her, but through the sign of the holy cross he was put to flight and defeated. Finally, she was beheaded by means of the aforementioned prefect and ended her life with holy martyrdom.
>
> At Antioch [is celebrated] the passion of the virgin Margaret, whom the consul Olibrius wishing to ravish and to turn from the faith of Christ afflicted with many torments: namely, he ordered her to be hung on the rack and her flesh to be lacerated with very sharp hooks. Afterwards he sent her into a dark prison, where she overcame the seductions of the devil, who appeared to her in the form of a dragon and of an Ethiopian, and his deception was unable to harm her at all. Finally, she was beheaded by the sword of the persecutor and passed into eternal life (Clayton and Magennis, p. 22 nn. 73 and 74).

The mid-ninth-century manuscript Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1395 (K. 784) similarly contains both legends, Marina immediately following Margaret (James E. Cross, 'The Notice on Marina (7 July) and *Passiones S.*

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[19] Clayton and Magennis (p. 75) list two mid-eleventh-century calendars to which Margaret was added in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: MSS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 422, and London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E.xviii.

[20] Astrid Krüger's recent study of approximately seventy-five Carolingian-era litanies (*Litanei-Handschriften der Karolingerzeit*) suggests that Margaret and Marina were both venerated, at least sometimes as different saints, to a limited extent in the late eighth and the ninth centuries, in a region that stretched from Tours to Cologne.

Margaritae', pp. 419, 422). Early litanies and calendars also include the two names.[21] Marina's story may well be the source of Margaret's—the earliest surviving account of Marina's passion pre-dates the earliest mention of a St Margaret by some fifty years[22]—but initially the two saints were venerated in the West as separate individuals with different feast days.

From the mid-ninth century Margaret's appearance as 'Margaret', in liturgical and other manuscripts, gradually becomes more frequent across western Europe. Among the documents that include her are Wandalbert of Prüm's poetical martyrology (ca. 848; '"Virg[o] clara Margarita"'),[23] Florus's martyrology (before 860),[24] Notker Babulus of Sankt Gallen's martyrology (before 912),[25] the Martyrology of Auxerre (10th c.),[26] Anglo-Saxon calendars (from ca. 950 onwards) and litanies (from the following century onwards),[27] and tenth-century calendars and litanies from Italy.[28] Early sacramentaries and missals suggest that in northern and central France the saint only became significant in the eleventh century, but that her popularity had already grown substantially by the twelfth.[29]

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[21] In Krüger's study Margaret and Marina appear in only nine manuscripts each. Of those manuscripts four contain litanies that name both saints. Clayton and Magennis (p. 74) provide a list of nine calendars from the tenth and eleventh centuries that list both saints. Litanies and calendars, however, are not reliable sources for a discussion of the cult of Marina, since there are multiple Marinas who share a similar array of feast days. Most notably, a Marina (also Maria) who lived disguised as a monk was celebrated by the Maronites of Lebanon (and, from the thirteenth century, the Venetians) on 17 July and by the Latins on 18 June (Léon Clugnet, *Vie et office de sainte Marine*, pp. vii–viii, xxi). The survival of one ninth- (Paris, BNF, lat. 2328), three eleventh- and nine twelfth-century manuscripts of her Latin Life suggests that Marina the Monk gained popularity in the West at the same time as the saint (or saints) of Antioch (Clugnet, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv). A third Marina, a martyr of Alexandria, contributes to the confusion; Usuard lists her feast as 18 June (Jacques Dubois, ed., *Le Martyrologe d'Usuard*, p. 249). On the complexities of Marina's legends, see also Hippolyte Delehaye (*The Legends of the Saints*, pp. 150–56).

[22] The Turin version of Marina's *passio* (*BHL*, 5303c) survives in a number of manuscripts, the earliest of which is from north-east France and dates from the end of the eighth century; the earliest Greek recension of Marina's life, the *Passio a Theotimo* (*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*—hereafter *BHG*—1165), may have been composed in the first half of the ninth century (Clayton and Magennis, pp. 6, 9–13). Clayton and Magennis provide a thorough discussion of the Greek and Latin versions of the legend (pp. 3–40).

[23] Clayton and Magennis, p. 23.

[24] Tammi, p. 57 n.4; *PL*, vol. 94, col. 799.

[25] Clayton and Magennis, p. 23; *PL* vol. 131, col. 1119.

[26] Tammi, p. 74; *PL*, vol. 138, col. 1231C.

[27] Clayton and Magennis, pp. 73, 76.

[28] Tammi, p. 67.

[29] In Victor Leroquais's catalogue (*Les Sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits*) none of the thirty-nine pre-eleventh-century manuscripts contains a reference to Margaret. Twelve per cent of the eleventh-century manuscripts mention Margaret, while she appears in twenty per cent of the twelfth-century manuscripts. The missals' origins suggest an equally

Copies of Margaret's Life further confirm the expansion of her cult at this time. For the Latin versions, there are approximately thirteen eleventh-century copies extant, while forty-three twelfth-century copies survive.[30] The first vernacular translation of Margaret's Passion, in Anglo-Saxon, dates to the beginning of the eleventh century; two subsequent Anglo-Saxon versions survive from the mid-eleventh and early twelfth centuries.[31]

The eleventh and twelfth centuries also saw the appearance in western Europe of Margaret's relics and of chapels and churches dedicated to her. Relics existed in Bath and Exeter, probably well before 1050, and in Winchester, Comines (north of Lille) and Faches (south of Lille) by the twelfth century.[32] As early as the tenth century, a church in Liège was dedicated to the saint (Francis, ed., p. xix n. 3). Other dedications include a church in Rapallo by the eleventh century, as well as twelfth-century churches at Montefiascone and Piacenza and a monastery at Como (Tammi, pp. 67–68). Two of the earliest English monastic houses dedicated to Margaret were in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, both founded at the turn of the eleventh to twelfth centuries (Clayton and Magennis, p. 80).

All of these dedications to Margaret indicate that the cults of Marina and Margaret had merged by this point. Although the earlier evidence suggests that Marina and Margaret were seen as separate, albeit very similar, saints, from the twelfth century onwards, Marina's name, when it appears at all, is regularly identified as an alternative name for Margaret. One example exists in a wall painting (ca. 1169) in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The icon identifies the depicted saint in Latin characters as 'Sca Margarita' and in Greek characters as 'Hagia Marina'.[33] A thirteenth-century French version of the saint's Life, under the name 'Marine', concludes with the explanation that 'this Marina, who was martyred in the city of Antioch, is called St Margaret'.[34]

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strong cult across the north, ranging from the Caen region to Saint-Omer and as far as to Cologne and Murbach Abbey in southern Alsace.

[30] *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina manuscripta*; these numbers do not include manuscripts that have not been ascribed to a specific century (e.g. manuscripts described as '11th or 12th century').

[31] Clayton and Magennis, p. 41. Each Anglo-Saxon text survives in just one copy (*ibid.*, p. 84).

[32] Clayton and Magennis, pp. 80–81; Tammi, p. 74, citing Albert Delsaux, *Sainte Marguerite d'Antioche*, chapter 6.

[33] Gustav Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 105–12 (for the date, see p. 143). Kühnel convincingly identifies a second Church of the Nativity column portrait, titled bilingually with the same names, as Marina the Monk.

[34] Joly, ed., p. 188 (our translation). The prose Life is preserved, among other manuscripts, in Paris, BNF, fr. 412 (13th century).

By the time Wace composed his *Life of St Margaret*, in the second quarter of the twelfth century, the saint's cult was thus widely diffused in Europe. No evidence of a particularly strong interest in Margaret in Normandy has been brought to light, but the region's ties to England, where Anglo-Saxon versions of her Life had long been available and were continuing to be written, may explain part of Wace's motivation in composing his translation. As with the *Conception Nostre Dame*, the poet may have wanted to encourage the cult of Margaret among the French-speaking inhabitants of Normandy and England. However, the direction of influence is not entirely clear. Clayton and Magennis note that Margaret appears to have gained importance in England with the arrival of the Normans: 'No dedications to Margaret are attested in the Anglo-Saxon period and it is only after the Conquest that we begin to find them' (p. 80). The English cult of Margaret has been more intensively studied than the French cult, and until we know more about French church dedication and iconographic history it is impossible to determine whether the cult was as developed in France as in England in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries (although the evidence of the French sacramentaries, cited above, seems to suggest that it was).[35] It is quite possible that the legend was well known to Wace's audience: he makes no reference to the audience's ignorance, as in the *Life of St Nicholas*, or to the need to explain the saint's feast, as he does for the feast of the Conception of Mary in the *Conception Nostre Dame*.

Another explanation may lie in the Normans' on-going activities in Asia Minor and the Holy Land, since Wace's other hagiographic works share this general setting. From the mid-eleventh century Norman mercenaries had fought both for and against the Byzantine emperors, including in Asia Minor (Timothy Gregory, *A History of Byzantium*, pp. 250–67). When Syrian Antioch fell in the First Crusade, it was Bohemond, a Norman, who became its first Christian prince, and Normans continued to play a dominant role in the settlement of the principality.[36] Although the Bollandists insist that Margaret lived in Pisidian Antioch, near modern

[35] Francis tentatively hypothesises that 'the cult of St. Margaret in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries was more flourishing in England than in France' ('A Hitherto Unprinted Version', p. 105). She seems to base this belief on the existence of multiple Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of Margaret's Life. None of these versions, however, attained a popularity that came anywhere near that of the continental French *Apres la sainte Passion* version (see below).

[36] 'By 1130 a number of powerful, landed, individuals had begun to appear in the principality. It is likely that a high proportion of these came from Norman background' (Thomas Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, p. 168). Bohemond came from southern Italy, as did several other early Christian Antiochenes, but Asbridge has shown that

Yalvaç in west-central Turkey,[37] the cultural-historical context of Wace's day suggests that he and his audience would more likely have understood 'Antioch' to be Antioch on the Orontes river (formerly in Syria and now in Turkey). Pisidian Antioch may have returned to western attention due to the crusaders' visits in their journeys across Asia Minor in 1097 and 1148,[38] but the emphasis of western politics in the East in the late eleventh and first half of the twelfth centuries was clearly on Syrian Antioch. Margaret was not exactly a local saint for Wace's Norman audience, but she may have been seen as belonging to Norman territory.[39]

Yet a third explanation for Wace's impetus in composing his work may lie in the development of an apotropaic aspect of Margaret's Life. Whereas in most early Latin versions, the saint requests protection for her devotees' infant children ('in his home let there not be born an infant lame or blind or dumb'),[40] a variant appears in the eleventh century that expands the request to include women in labour: 'If a pregnant woman in labour calls on me, rescue her from imminent danger, and may, too, the infant who is being born from the womb gain the light of this world without any harm to his members.'[41] Wace apparently followed this second Latin version at this point of his translation. By including the saint's protection of women in labour, he may well have contributed to the expansion of Margaret's cult:

Normans directly from Normandy also formed a significant percentage of the population (pp. 163–68).

[37] The Bollandists claim that Margaret 'is assigned by everyone to Antioch in Pisidia' ('ab omnibus Antiochiæ in Pisidia adscribitur', *AASS*, p. 40).

[38] Frankish forces passed directly through Antioch in Pisidia on both the First and Second Crusades (Christopher Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 123, 131, 303, 326).

[39] Another political explanation for the interest in St Margaret in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries involves St Margaret of Scotland, who probably became important at the English court in the late 1050s (Clayton and Magennis, p. 82); her granddaughter was Matilda, claimant of the English throne in the 1130s. Clayton and Magennis see the composition of Anglo-Saxon Lives of St Margaret as a possible tribute to Margaret of Scotland (p. 83).

[40] From the *passio* in MS Paris, BNF, lat. 5574: 'In domo illius non nascatur infans claudus aut cecus neque mutus' (Clayton and Magennis, pp. 214–15; the translation is theirs).

[41] 'Iterum si in domo me invocans mulier pregnans in partu laboraverit, ab imminente eripe eam periculo, infansque quoque ex utero fusus lumine potiatur seculi huius, absque suorum aliquo detrimento membrorum' (Francis, 'A Hitherto Unprinted Version', p. 103). The earliest known manuscript of this version (Caligula) dates to the eleventh century (Paris, BNF, lat. 5565); the nine other manuscripts span the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, mainly dating from the thirteenth (Francis, *ibid.*, p. 88; the *BHL* lists the Paris manuscripts and other manuscripts that Francis does not include under no. 5306).

Se feme est en travail d'enfant
E par besuing m'alt reclamant,
Bels sire Deus, lor fai aïe
Et l'un e l'altre met a vie. (vv. 647–50)

As Francis argues, these lines may have introduced into the vernacular the appeal on behalf of labouring women and may thus have influenced four Old French versions.[42] These renditions include the one that would become arguably the most popular of any of the saints' Lives composed in French during the entire Middle Ages. Surviving in possibly as many as a hundred manuscripts, this version (*incipit*: 'Apres la sainte Passion / Jhesucrist a l'Ascencion') expands Margaret's prayer to include directions for how to use the Life: for a safe delivery, the mother should sign herself with a book containing the Life, or look into the book or place it on herself, as well as hear it read.[43] Le Saux sees Wace's reference to Margaret's patronage of labouring women as 'the key to the entire work' because it 'hugely increased the potential number of her devotees' (*Companion*, p. 24). Although this patronage of labouring women already existed in one of Wace's Latin sources and may have already been known among non-Latinate audiences, Wace's version may be the source of Margaret's popularity with laywomen.[44] While mothers might not be able to hope for the painless delivery that the Virgin Mary enjoyed, they could pray to have some of the pain allayed through the intercession of the martyrs who had suffered for their faith.

Whether or not Wace's version played a pivotal role in popularising Margaret's status as the patron saint of women in labour, his *Margaret*

[42] These texts do not seem to show any other knowledge of the Caligula version (Francis, ed., p. xiii).

[43] Joly, ed., p. 221, vv. 535–49. Among the manuscripts of this version are Paris, BNF, fr. 1809, 2162, 2198, 19526; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 112; Manchester, John Rylands University Library, fr. 143; Charlottesville, University of Virginia Library, M.Ms. 12455 and 382; and Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W. 91.

[44] The connection between Margaret's patronage of labouring women and the popularity of her cult is certainly evident in the physical characteristics of some of the copies of the *Apres la sainte Passion* version. Several manuscripts in the form of amulets survive, such as Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris, ico, 77.2.1 (fourteenth century), while others are birthing belts—long rolls of parchment—such as New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M.1072 and M.779 (both dating from the fifteenth century); see Don Skemer, *Binding Words*, pp. 245–46. For a discussion and reproduction of the amulet, see Louis Carolus-Barré, 'Un nouveau parchemin amulette et la légende de sainte Marguerite'. Like MS T of Wace's *Margaret*, a considerable number of copies of the more popular *Apres la sainte Passion* version exist within Books of Hours, which seem to have functioned as amulets (Skemer, p. 268). See also below pp. 171–73.

is important both as an early testimony to this significant aspect of the cult and as the earliest of the many Old French renditions of the Life. Fourteen verse (including Wace's) and eighteen prose Lives in French survive from between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries, as well as a mystery play from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.[45] Of the verse versions, which Tammi and Keller describe in detail, half are Anglo-Norman and most were probably composed in the thirteenth century (Tammi, pp. 99–104; Keller, ed., pp. 13–18).[46] Eight are in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, while the others represent a variety of poetic forms. Most are anonymous, but three were written by identified authors: Fouque (13th century), Nicole Bozon (late 13th or early 14th century) and Destrées (early 16th century). Only Wace's poem and the widely-disseminated *Apres la sainte Passion* survive in more than one identified manuscript. All of the verse renditions are brief; most are between 500 and 700 lines.[47] Tammi and Keller provide initial descriptions of the prose versions, the earliest of which date to the late thirteenth century (Tammi, pp. 104–07; Keller, ed., pp. 18–21). Most, if not all, of these redactions appear to be translations of the Latin legendaries that became popular in the thirteenth century (Francis, ed., p. xii).

Themes

Like most hagiographers, Wace aims both to please and to teach. The themes he highlights as he recounts the story of Margaret's passion reflect these goals: specifically, violence, pain, virginity, power (especially gender dynamics), demonic visions (the dragon and devil), the saint as intercessor, patronage of women in labour, the saint as *sponsa Christi* and love. Whereas some authors, like the anonymous composer of the *Old English Martyrology*, entirely suppress the saint's dramatic encounter with the dragon, and others, like the *BHL* 5303 hagiographer, present a disparate collection of miracles demonstrating the martyr's sanctity more than her

[45] Joly provides extensive discussion and extracts of the *Vie de Madame sainte Marguerite (par personnages)* (pp. 30–47, 145–79).

[46] Six to nine date from the thirteenth century. One might be twelfth century and two could be fourteenth; one is fourteenth century, two fifteenth and one sixteenth.

[47] The longest Life identified (1332 lines; 15th century) was owned by Soleil in the nineteenth century; its current location is unknown. Soleil offers a partial edition in *La Vierge Marguerite*, pp. 4–18.

humanity, Wace composes a dramatic, integrated series of events.[48] By emphasising Margaret's relationships with others, he not only weaves the episodes into a unified narrative but also establishes the saint's efficacy as a model and an intercessor.

Violence, Power and Sexuality

Of the various prominent themes in Wace's poem, the topics that have garnered the most scholarly attention are those related to the violence directed against the saint. Most of the scholars who have examined this violence have focused on the relationship between Olybrius and Margaret and on issues of power, gender and sexuality: the female virgin martyr is tortured by the lustful male tyrant. Initially, scholars looked at this violence as typical of the patriarchal subjection of women by the Church, and by society more generally. Kathryn Gravdal, for example, sees Margaret's narrative as a rape plot and argues that 'the representation of the female saint in a sexual plot acts to feminize weakness and sexual transgression and to legitimize sexual violence as a test of the saintly female' (*Ravishing Maidens*, p. 41). Gravdal (p. 24) and others often see the female virgin martyr not only as a victim of the pagan tyrant, but also as a victim of the audience's voyeuristic gaze, and often also as a victim of the male hagiographer's attempts to circumscribe her heroic strength.[49] Even later studies that include male martyrs and show that *all* martyrs are subjected to potentially humiliating and excruciating violence continue to present female martyrs as sexual victims. Sarah Kay puts forward the provocative and compelling argument that Wace's text, like other martyrs' Passions (male as well as female), takes, and encourages, perverse pleasure in the saint's suffering: 'The way God delays the arrival of [the martyr's final] death [...] allows more space to the murderous desires of the persecutors and so creates a disturbing collusion between the obscenity of pagan violence and its miraculous prolongation by God's power' (*Courtly Contradictions*, p. 224). While acknowledging that male martyrs are objectified in similar ways to female martyrs, Kay maintains that there is a specifically sexual dimension to the narratives about female saints that

[48] For a full comparison of Wace's *Margaret* with the Mombritius version, see Desmond, 'The Concept of Narrative', esp. pp. 18–54.

[49] See Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, p. 216; Phyllis Johnson and Brigitte Cazelles, *'Le vain siecle guerpir'*, p. 133. Katherine J. Lewis refutes this approach in ' "Lete Me Suffre" ', pp. 69–82.

is lacking in the narratives about men (p. 226). After all, female martyrs are frequently the recipients of marriage proposals or threats, whereas few, if any, early male martyrs are tempted by, or threatened with, sexual relationships.

Emma Campbell examines this disparity in the light of Giorgio Agamben's theories of sovereignty and concludes that 'the so-called victimization of the female saint should be seen on a continuum with that of the male martyr' ('Homo sacer', pp. 267–68). The pagan tyrants attempt to subjugate both male and female martyrs, but for female martyrs that subjugation is either within marriage or through torture: 'The marriage proposed by the pagan tyrant, in offering a space in which the female body would be absolutely subject to the authority of her husband, is seen as equivalent to the exercise of power over life displayed through torture' (Campbell, p. 266). For Campbell, what is at stake in all martyrs' narratives is this power over life, and both male and female martyrs successfully resist the pagan authority and willingly embrace Christian sovereignty.

Campbell's recognition that Margaret's virginity is 'inseparable' from her life allows her to elucidate one of the more obscure passages in Wace's text (p. 266). After the saint has vanquished the dragon, the devil Beelzebub says to her: 'I sent you my brother Rufo, / Who took on the appearance of a dragon; / He should have swallowed you / And robbed you of your virginity' (vv. 369–72). This is the first explicit indication in the scene that the dragon's violent attack is in any way sexual. As Campbell explains, 'Margaret's encounter with the dragon while she is in prison represents a conflation of sexual violation with a violence directed at the body and life of the saint, a conflation that reproduces the paradigm of sexual sovereignty already implicit in Olybrius's speech', specifically in his speech to Margaret offering her the alternative between marriage and torture (p. 265). The parallel between Olybrius and the dragon, and the conflation of sexual violence, torture and threats of execution, reveal the nature of the main conflict depicted in the poem. Like Satan, the pagan tyrant rebelliously refuses God's authority, which the martyr upholds. Her victory demonstrates the ultimate inefficacy of any power not based on God's law (p. 269). Rather than feminising weakness and legitimising sexual violence, Margaret's Life, like female martyrs' Lives more generally, exposes the weakness of the men who attempt to subjugate the female saint and challenges even normative sexual relations, such as those within marriage (p. 268 n. 36).

The Dragon

Along with George and Michael, Margaret is one of the saints most commonly associated with dragon-slaying. Her victory over the dragon and a devil are essential elements of her story from early in the tradition, if not from the very beginning (see Hrabanus Maurus, cited above, p. 160). Unlike other versions, such as the *BHL* 5303 *passio* (ed. Clayton and Magennis), Wace's *Margaret* conflates the dragon and the devil; thus, for example, it is a *diables* ('devil', v. 335) who almost swallows her, but when she makes the sign of the cross to slay the creature the gesture splits open the *dragun* ('dragon', v. 338). Later, when the saint encounters the devil, she asserts that she sees the *diable* she has conquered (v. 348), but some lines later she addresses him as 'draguns' (v. 381). The conflation is biblical, occurring in Chapter 12 of the Book of the Apocalypse. Here, a dragon attacks a woman in labour and Michael defeats 'that great dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan' (12:9, our translation). Wace's dragon differs somewhat from the creature as it appears in the *BHL* 5303 *passio* and other versions: it is mostly black instead of golden and its eyes resemble serpent eyes rather than pearls (a comparison that might cause confusion, since *margarita* means pearl, as Wace explains in his prologue). The elements that Wace retains from his source or sources derive primarily from biblical and Christian traditions, as Pascal Boulhol shows in his analysis of the earliest Greek Passion, *BHG* 1165 (pp. 262–66). The description of Leviathan in Job 41:10–12 (NRSV 41:19–21) provides the fiery and smoky breath (pp. 264–65); it is worth adding that Margaret's fear upon seeing the creature echoes Job 41:16 (NRSV 41:25), in which 'the angels shall fear'. The stench likely comes from a pagan association of the underworld with noxious odours, an association which continued in Christian depictions of hell. The hagiographic tradition refines the connection so that evil smells symbolise the stench of sin and demonic possession, while sweet smells signify the perfume of virtue and divine inspiration (Boulhol, 'Hagiographie antique et démonologie', p. 266). Boulhol (p. 263 n. 36) suggests that the sword in the dragon's hand may derive from the swords of Ps. 9:7 ('The swords of the enemy have failed unto the end'; the NRSV differs here), which Augustine glosses as 'various misguided opinions by which the devil destroys souls as though by cutting them down' (Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*, p. 145). Wace does not encumber his work with explanations, but by using these evocative details and by presenting the dragon and devil as interchangeable, he suggests the rich

and complex tradition of battles of Good and Evil, all the while conveying the drama of the scene.

The dragon's sole action—the ingestion of Margaret—has troubled scholars for hundreds of years. Jacobus de Voragine reports that there are two accounts of the event: the first characterises the dragon as a vision that evaporates when Margaret makes the sign of the cross, while the second, which Jacobus dismisses as 'apocryphum et friuolum' ('apocryphal and worthless'), claims that the dragon in fact swallows the saint (p. 618). As Jocelyn Price has shown, the corporeality of demons was greatly debated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For writers like William of Saint-Thierry and eventually Aquinas, demonic apparitions could not have corporeal forms and they certainly could not be killed, since they were doomed to perpetual suffering in hell ('The Virgin and the Dragon', pp. 340–41). More modern censure, such as that by Meyer, has focused on the obviously non-historical nature of the encounter (see above, p. 158). Wace's treatment of the scene, however, reflects his characteristic dedication both to historical concerns and to entertainment. By repeating the phrase 'a bien prés' ('almost', vv. 332, 336), when he describes the moment of ingestion, he captures the drama that depends on the dragon's corporeal presence, but avoids claiming that the dragon actually swallows Margaret. Similarly, he presents the climactic image of the dragon splitting open and Margaret emerging in direct and dramatic language (vv. 338–40), but immediately asserts that Margaret felt no pain, and the dragon vanishes, leaving no corpse. The devil who next appears claims that Margaret has slain the dragon (v. 373), but, after all, his demonic nature is to seduce through lies. Wace thus fully exploits the drama of the episode—and evokes the image of Margaret that would become the most widely disseminated[50]—and yet no element of the scene proves unequivocally that the dragon is more than an apparition.[51]

[50] For a discussion of the iconographic tradition, see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Le Cycle de sainte Marguerite d'Antioche'. See also Alison Stones, 'Commentaire des enluminures du Ms Troyes 1905', pp. 205–08 (esp. note 77).

[51] In contrast, Wace's treatment of Margaret's encounter with the devil is specifically physical: she pulls his hair, throws him down and puts her foot on his head (vv. 377–80). This scene does not seem to have attracted as much disapproval, presumably because the devil is already bound and poses no physical threat to the saint.

Patronage of Women in Labour

Margaret's strength in subduing Evil, together with her steadfast resistance to violence and pain, her humble submission to God and the frequent miracles by which God delivers her from suffering, establishes the saint's fitness as an intercessor between the faithful and God. In an unusual concluding prayer Margaret herself defines her intercessory role in very specific terms. She not only identifies groups of people she will particularly help, but also specifies what actions her devotees must complete in order to secure her aid (vv. 617–62). These groups include repentant sinners, people brought before a judge, newborn infants and women in labour, although she seeks protection for anyone who prays in her name. As has often been noted, the devotional activities that Margaret recommends encourage piety from all levels of society; the actions range from remembering the saint's name or lighting a candle for her to building a church. Prominent among these actions are reading and listening to accounts Margaret's life.

Wace's version of this prayer is similar to those of most of the earlier Lives of Margaret. His inclusion of women in labour is the one significant difference, although this addition does occur in one previous Latin *passio* (see above, pp. 164–65). In addition to protecting the fœtus and the infant as it is born, Margaret now also provides succour to mothers. As indicated above, the insertion may have contributed to Margaret's enormous popularity in the following centuries. However, it also led to a significant paradox for modern critics: how could a virgin martyr be the patron saint of childbirth?[52] Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg has shown that the association of virginity with motherhood was far from unusual for a culture enamoured of the Virgin Mary and that a number of virgins were seen as important patron saints for mothers (*Forgetful of Their Sex*, pp. 229–31).[53]

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[52] See, for example, Joly, ed., p. 186: 'On ne voit pas bien par quelle déduction logique la légende en était arrivée à cette terminaison et comment la chaste enfant, sacrifiant si résolument sa vie à la pureté, avait pu être promue à un pareil rôle' ('It is difficult to perceive by what logical deduction the legend arrived at this end and how the chaste child, who sacrificed her life so resolutely to purity, could have been promoted to such a role'). Albert similarly points out that the allusion to childbirth seems to be 'en rupture avec tout le contexte' ('in conflict with the whole context') since the theme plays no role at all in the preceding narrative ('La Légende de sainte Marguerite', p. 5).

[53] See also Skemer, p. 236. Wendy R. Larson explains that 'the association of St. Margaret with childbirth . . . stemmed from her efficacy against demons. The maladies against

The paradox, then, is not that of a patron saint of labouring women who is a *virgin*, but rather that of one who is a virgin and who adamantly and successfully resists all attempts to lead her into the system of procreation. Most attempts at resolving the paradox depend on the common representation of Margaret emerging from the dragon, which is clearly a birthing image.[54] However, this image explains her protection of newborns more clearly than that of mothers. It would imply that the dragon is a figure for the labouring woman. Critics generally gloss over this problem or cite it as another instance of clerical misogyny, but Jean-Pierre Albert provides a suggestive discussion of the mythic resonances of the scene in Jacobus de Voragine's version, and of birthing practices and beliefs that help to elucidate the relationship between Margaret and the dragon. Observing that Margaret prays to God to see the enemy with whom she is struggling, Albert proposes that the dragon represents temptation and specifically 'l'attachement à la chair' ('attachment to the flesh'). He further notes popular traditions of representing the womb as a reptile and of using a birthing belt with Margaret's story written on it ('La Légende de sainte Marguerite', p. 26; see also n. 44 above). The dragon, then, does not represent the labouring mother, but rather her womb and the dangers associated with childbirth that, for a Christian audience, derive from Eve's surrender to fleshly temptation in Genesis. Because Margaret vanquishes the dragon, she is capable of helping other women to overcome the dangers of labour.

Another explanation of Margaret's patronage of labouring women involves the saint's role as a model. Lewis, in her study of four fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English versions of Margaret's Life, implies that the logic of Margaret's role as patron saint of women in labour comes from the shared feminine experience of suffering (' "Lete Me Suffre" ', pp. 81–82). Margaret does not seek out her martyrdom, even though in Wace's text she is explicitly inspired by stories of other martyrs (vv. 73–78), but she actively turns the experience into one of 'voluntary self-sacrifice' (Lewis, p. 82) by welcoming it: ' "I want my flesh to be tortured", she says to Olybrius, "so that my soul can be saved in heaven" ' (vv. 271–72). For anyone in pain she thus serves as a model of how to make sense of, and take control of, suffering. Wace's evocation of labouring women in Margaret's

which she promises protection—blindness, dumbness, lameness, and madness—are all associated with demonic activity' ('Who Is the Master of this Narrative?', p. 97).

[54] See, for example, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message', pp. 47 and 53.

final prayer then explicitly defines labour as an opportunity to imitate Margaret as well as to pray to her for help. The connection of martyrdom with labour further suggests a positive significance for labour pains in place of the explanation given in Genesis 3:16, where they are punishment for Eve's sin. Just as Margaret's torment allows her to go to heaven, the labouring woman's pain can be a path to salvation, if she responds to it appropriately.

Love

In juxtaposition with Margaret's terrestrial experiences of pain and of cruel human relationships, Wace develops the saint's loving relationship with God and the fleeting visions of eternal pleasure that it affords her even in this life. Systematically recording the variations between Wace's *Margaret*, the most widely disseminated Latin version (*BHL* 5303, in Francis's edition), and the Middle English *Seinte Marherete: Þe Meiden ant Martyr* (ca. 1200), Diane Mockridge shows the increased interest of the vernacular authors in Margaret's virginity and her role as *sponsa Christi*, as well as in the humanity of both the saint and God ('From Christ's Soldier to his Bride'). As Mockridge suggests, the marital relationship between Margaret and God is one of continuous exchange. The saint offers her virginity to God as a sign of her loyalty and requests as recompense protection of her soul so that she can remain loyal to him and continue to praise him. God, through the dove who speaks to the saint, accepts her gift and fulfils her request (Mockridge, pp. 123, 141; *Margaret*, vv. 109–20, 391–400). Postlewate argues that Wace develops the theme of love in order to convey the new mystical theology of the period to his non-Latinate audience, specifically by 'drawing them into participation in the story' ('Vernacular Hagiography and Lay Piety', p. 119). She notes that in the epilogue Wace proposes that his audience should imitate Margaret by loving (p. 120):

> Or prions Deus qui est *et* fu
> E a sur tote rien vertu
> Por l'amor sainte Marguerite
> Dont nos avons la vie dite
> Si voírement cum Deus l'ama
> E en sa fín molt l'enora. (Keller, MS M, vv. 731–36)[55]

[55] 'Out of love for St Margaret, about whom we have recounted this Life and truly told how God loved her and honoured her greatly in her death, now let us pray to God who is and was and who has power over everything' (our translation). This passage occurs in M,

Wace, in fact, creates a sequence of loving imitations from the very start of the text right up to this conclusion. It is the love for God of previous martyrs that inspires Margaret to love God and offer her chastity to him, which he in turn accepts lovingly (vv. 71–79).[56] The five thousand who are later converted die 'pur la Deu amur' (v. 586) after witnessing Margaret's readiness to suffer and the miracle that spares her. Although the executioner Malcus does not express love, he does invoke it twice as the reason why Margaret might seek his pardon from God and God might grant it (vv. 604, 700). In her final prayer Margaret explicitly asks God to pardon all 'qui pur m'amur te prïerunt' (v. 655), expanding the possibility to the audience. Malcus's second request thus demonstrates how one might express this faith in Margaret's love. Wace's concluding lines then explicitly invite the audience to follow the saint's suggestion and Malcus's model by praying, thereby creating a potentially infinite sequence of loving imitations that joins the audience, author and subjects of the Life in a loving communion with God.[57] Postlewate further suggests that this kind of participatory lay spirituality would lead, in the following century, to the Beguine movement and other devotional practices modelled on monastic life (pp. 120–21).

Style

One of the reasons frequently cited for seeing the *Life of St Margaret* as the first of Wace's works is the text's apparent simplicity. Ronsjö (pp. 21–25) was the first to quantify the stylistic differences among the Lives, noting, for example, only four cases of apostrophe (as compared to eight in the *Conception* and at least twenty-one in the *Nicholas*) and fourteen juxtapositions of synonymous terms (forty-two in the *Conception*

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the oldest copy of Wace's *Margaret*, but not in T, which Keller chose to follow for lines vv. 735–36 of his reconstruction. Postlewate translates vv. 732–35 as 'For the love of Saint Margaret whose life we have told, as God truly loved her and in her death greatly honored her' (p. 120).

[56] As Desmond has commented, Margaret's love for God is the 'initiating cause of the action'. Wace presents it as the initial event of the narrative and then, at the end, as 'the motivation out of which God acts to save others'. Desmond sees love as less important in the middle of the text (p. 53). Although Wace does consistently invoke love as a motivating factor throughout the Life, the theme is not as developed as it is in later Lives, such as Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine*.

[57] For a more extensive analysis of the ways in which a saint's Life can create this type of loving community, see Amy V. Ogden, *Hagiography, Romance and the Vie de sainte Eufrosine*, esp. pp. 94–97, 204–06 and 219–23.

and seventy-seven in the *Nicholas*). Grossel adds a comparison of the use of quatrains (i.e. two successive couplets on the same rhyme): three in the *Margaret*, as compared to seventeen each in the *Conception* and the *Nicholas* ('Wace, traducteur de vies de saint', p. 213). Whilst these numbers show that the *Margaret* contains the fewest rhetorical ornaments, and consequently that it is most likely Wace's earliest composition (Ronsjö, p. 20), they misleadingly suggest that the *Margaret* is an immature work, lacking stylistic merit. Indeed, some of the earliest critics dismissed the *Margaret* and its author as dry and boring (Carin Fahlin, *Étude sur le manuscrit de Tours*, p. 170, cited in Keller, ed., p. 44 n. 134) and mediocre (Meyer, 'Légendes hagiographiques en français', pp. 329–30; Montgomery, 'Structure', p. 302). Even Francis offered only a tepid recommendation: 'La version rimée de Wace intéresse moins par les qualités littéraires du récit que par ce qu'elle apprend de la formation d'un homme de lettres du XII^{e} siècle [...] elle n'est pas, à tout prendre, indigne de l'auteur du *Brut* et du *Roman de Rou*'.[58]

The *Margaret* has received a more sensitive reading from Keller, its most recent editor, who highlights a number of the poem's strengths. He also notes that the quality of the work is even more remarkable when we consider its early date (p. 48): it is the fourth oldest surviving Life in French, after the *Sequence of St Eulalia* (ca. 880), the *Life of St Leger* (ca. 1000) and the *Life of St Alexis* (ca. 1050–1100). It is also among the dozen oldest surviving Old French texts of any genre.

The merits of Wace's poem may have been overlooked for so long because, not surprisingly, it does not conform to our expectations of later medieval French literature. Its style manifests the sobriety of the few earlier vernacular works, rather than the sumptuousness of even the first surviving French romances, written a decade or more later. The *Margaret* contains few extended descriptions: the longest depicts the dragon, and, while it demonstrates Wace's abilities to exploit the dramatic potential of a scene, the description comprises a mere nine lines (vv. 308–16). In comparison, the more popular version of Margaret's Life (*Apres la sainte Passion*), composed in the thirteenth century, offers a fifteen-line description of the dragon, even though this text as a whole is shorter than Wace's version (Joly, ed., vv. 278–92). The descriptive terms Wace uses to present

[58] 'Wace's rhymed version is less interesting for the literary qualities of the narrative than for what it conveys about the training of a twelfth-century man of letters [...]. It is not, all in all, unworthy of the author of the *Brut* or the *Roman de Rou*' (ed., p. xx).

the saint herself are very typical of depictions of female saints and even, for the most part, of secular heroines. Moreover, we find these details scattered throughout the text rather than compiled in a formal portrait: Margaret is 'saintisme' (v. 3), 'assez . . . gente et assez bele' (v. 9), 'bune' (v. 38), 'tant . . . avenant e bele' (v. 454). We also read that she 'bien resembla margerie / De sa belté e de sa vie' (vv. 13–14) and that 'crestïene esteit lealment' (v. 43).

Of these descriptive terms, almost all appear in the majority of French Lives from both early and later periods; even the pearl comparison, a particular play on Margaret's name, which means 'pearl', belongs to the common theme of comparing the saintly protagonist to a precious gem. Moreover, although nearly seventy per cent of the text consists of direct discourse (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 26), Wace does not exploit these speeches to convey elaborate conceptual musings or complex spiritual teachings, as both romances and saints' Lives will increasingly do (see Françoise Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, p. 248). In her prayers and speeches Margaret affirms her faith, praises God's virtues, requests God's help to remain loyal and pure in the face of her trials, expresses her desire for, and describes visions of, glory, articulates basic Christian teachings (e.g. God chose to die in order to save his people; suffering in this life leads to joy in the next; idols have no power) and finally articulates specific directions with regard to how to honour both her and God. The saint's discussions with Olybrius consist of simple exchanges of threats or promises and affirmations of faith, while Beelzebub's lengthy speeches describe his objectives, but contain no explanation of his methods. In contrast, in the late twelfth-century *Life of St Juliana*, Satan provides detailed descriptions of his techniques (e.g. 'Kil vult aleir ver lo mostier [. . .] tot droit a la senestre oreilhe / li met mon chief, si li conselhe: "cil clerc cantent trop longes ores" ' / 'Whoever wants to go to church [. . .], / Directly in his left ear, / I put my head and counsel him: / "Those clerics sing the hours for too long" ', ed. von Feilitzen, vv. 729–35, our translation). The extent of the direct discourse in the *Margaret* hints at later developments in hagiography, but the straightforward content of the speeches conforms to the reticence of the first generation of French Lives. The *Sequence of St Eulalia* contains no direct discourse and the *Life of St Leger* a mere eight lines, while in the earliest *Life of St Alexis* the saint rarely speaks and his pronouncements are all quite terse.

The authorial commentary that was to become characteristic of later twelfth-century texts—and, indeed, of Wace's later work—is very limited in the *Margaret*, as in the other early Lives. Taken together, the *Margaret*'s

prologue and epilogue amount to fewer than forty lines, and most of the prologue consists of an evocation of the saint's moral character and a summary of the narrative, rather than of any explicit commentary. The commentary that Wace does provide, like that of the authors of the *Eulalia*, the *Leger* and the *Alexis*, presents straightforward directions to the audience with regard to how to understand his work. All four of these early Lives identify the audience as a community of faithful, emphasise the saint's intercessory powers and exhort the audience to pray to the saint to use these powers on their behalf.

However, the *Margaret* is the earliest surviving French Life in which the author discusses the writing process and identifies himself or herself as responsible for creating the work in its present form. Whereas the earlier narrators speak as clerkly officiants, directing the audience to reflect and to pray, Wace presents himself as a reader, writer and storyteller. These references have two effects. First, they suggest a less hierarchical relationship between the author and the audience, since all are readers or listeners of his poem. The author is sharing something he has learned, and the knowledge that his readers and listeners gain from what he has said makes them his equals as they reflect on the story and pray to the saint. When Wace says, 'De noz pechiez pardun nus face. / Ci falt sa vië, ce dit Wace' (vv. 737–38), the 'Life' to which he refers appears to be simultaneously the Latin source he is reading and the vernacular text he is producing. This more egalitarian mode of addressing the audience will become, in later Lives, a technique for evoking secular literary styles and therefore for suggesting that the present Life will offer the same entertainment value as do secular works, drawing in an audience that may not initially appreciate hagiography.[59] The second effect of Wace's self-presentation as a writer involves a change in the literary status of the text. Although later writers of saints' Lives and of other genres will discuss at much greater length the trouble they have undertaken, even in Wace's brief allusion to his effort as a translator we see the beginnings of an assertion that the text merits attention as a poem and not just as a vehicle for praising the saint.

Wace's integration of the aims of pleasing and teaching is evident in the stylistic techniques he employs. In order to please, he heightens the drama of the text through his dynamic style of narration and his use of apostrophe; he teaches his audience by emphasising the essential details and concepts through his use of repetition, antithesis and rhyming patterns.

[59] See, for example, Denis Piramus's prologue to his *Life of St Edmund*.

M. Malkiel Jirmounsky, in his 'Essai d'analyse des procédés littéraires de Wace', studies Wace's stylistic traits in the *Brut* and attributes the dynamism of Wace's narration to the use of expressive verbs (p. 273), concrete details (p. 274) and evocations of witnesses' reactions (p. 277). Wace already makes use of these elements to significant effect in the dramatic scenes in the *Margaret*, even though his style is much more restrained than in his later works. For example, the scene of Margaret's first torture is unflinchingly brutal (vv. 187–92, 197–200). Whereas the *Eulalia* poet merely states that the saint was thrown into the fire, but did not burn (vv. 19–20), and the *Leger* poet relates the miracle of the saint's body, which remains standing after it is beheaded (vv. 229–34), Wace specifically stresses the physical result of his saint's torture. Here, the saint bleeds, both as a result of the torturers' blows and as a cause of the onlookers' pity. Wace uses the witnesses' response to call attention to the severity of the torture and to elicit the audience's compassion, but also, significantly, to make the scene more vivid for his readers and listeners.

Similarly, Wace uses apostrophe both to highlight two of the most dramatic scenes and to call attention to the appropriate response to his work. It is worth noting that the inevitable ending of Lives—the saint's ascension to heaven—poses an obstacle to an author's efforts to create dramatic tension; the saint will invariably triumph in any trial she undergoes. This tension between drama and faith is evident as Wace recounts Margaret's meeting with the dragon. When the dragon appears in her cell, the saint's first response is to pray for protection. Her prayer begins by asserting her faith in God's supremacy over Satan, which might undermine the dramatic tension of the scene. If God can break the gates of hell, surely he can protect her from a dragon. However, Margaret's prayer concludes on a series of verbs whose subjunctive mood suggests that the outcome of the encounter is not, in fact, certain:

> Pri tei que *oies* m'oreisun
> Que *puisse* vaincre cest felun,
> Que il mal ne me *puisse* faire
> Ne a sa fosse avuec lui traire. (vv. 327–30, our italics)

Wace's subsequent use of apostrophe builds on this uncertainty. 'Ez vus celui, gule baee!' (v. 331), he continues, thereby bringing the dragon, with his gaping mouth, right up to the saint and to the audience. Although the audience would most likely know, or suspect, the ending of the scene, Wace creates drama by drawing them into the action. Later in the poem, he uses the expression *ez vus* twice to highlight the climactic moment

when the Holy Ghost descends to announce that Margaret is about to be welcomed into the heavenly company (vv. 563, 571). He thus emphasises the announcement and articulates a sense of awe and immediacy, which presumably the audience is intended to share. The witnesses in the text (more than five thousand) immediately convert (vv. 575–78), thereby exemplifying the proper response. Although the *Alexis* includes one instance of *ez vus* ('est vus', v. 182), the *Margaret* is the first surviving saint's Life to use apostrophe to maintain an active relationship between the speaking narrator and the listening audience throughout the text, rather than merely evoking the relationship in the framing prologue and epilogue; later poets, such as the author of the *Life of St Eufrosine*, will continue to employ *ez vus* at dramatic moments and also to develop more extensive addresses to their audience within the narrative (as does Wace in his *Nicholas*, see below).

Wace's use of repetition and antithesis may further contribute to the drama of his work, but their main purpose appears to be didactic.[60] In particular, synonyms and near-synonymous pairings highlight the extent of the saint's qualities and the magnitude of her trials. For example, Margaret is 'assez . . . gente et assez bele' (v. 9, also vv. 102, 427), and she is said to be the 'ancele Deu . . . et espuse' (v. 16) and also to be 'monde e pure' (v. 625). We are told that she endured 'peine' and 'turment' (v. 6), and Olybrius says to her: ' "Je te ferai vilment pener; / A turment murir te ferai, / En feu ardant tun cors metrai" ' (vv. 156–58). In order to convey the depth of the saint's loving relationship with God, the poet employs different forms of repetition. When he first presents the relationship, he leaves no doubt as to the object of Margaret's affection: 'Ele ama Deu e Deu l'ama / . . . / Deu aora e Deu ot chier' (vv. 61, 63). The chiasmus in the first of the lines reinforces the repetition and shows the degree to which God and the saint are united in love.

Similarly, the poet insists on the strength of Margaret's love and faith through his use of anaphora (the repetition of a sequence of words at the beginning of a line or phrase). When he explains that Margaret has become a Christian, he says: 'En Deu creeit omnipotent, / En Deu creeit et aoreit' (vv. 44–45). The anaphora here breaks the rhythm of the couplet, giving even greater emphasis to the saint's belief. Wace further employs anaphora in two of Margaret's prayers as she addresses God:

[60] See Einar Ronsjö's discussion of the juxtaposition of synonymous terms in Wace's *Nicholas* (ed., p. 23).

Deus, qui ne veis rien se bien nun,
Veirs jugierre, veire lumiere. (vv. 284–85)

Deus, qui partut as ta puissance,
Veirs salviere, veire esperance,
Veire pitiez de pecheürs,
Veirs Deus, veirs Sire, veirs socurs,
Veirs jugiere, veire justise. (vv. 549–53)

The repetition of the term *veirs* ('true') links the prayers in such a way that the second example expands on and reinforces the first. Both prayers occur just after Margaret has endured torture (a beating in the first case and the fire and water tortures in the second). The anaphora insistently highlights Margaret's faith in the truth and justice of God's future treatment of her, implicitly contrasting it with the injustice of her treatment by the powers of this world. The final anaphora of the text enlarges the loving relationship to include all those who have faith in the saint:

Qui ma vie o bon cuer lira
U de bun cuer l'escultera,
U qui de sa gaagnerie
A m'eglise fera aïe,
U qui chapele u qui mustier
A mei fera edefïer,
U del sien i metra lumiere,
Oies, sire Deus, lur priere. (vv. 631–38, our italics)

The rhetorical figure's emphasis on action suggests that the faithful must actively respond to the poem and demonstrate their love for the saint, even if such actions are as simple as lighting a candle.

Wace's use of antithesis to convey the more conceptual teachings of his text is fully in keeping with the twelfth-century's 'overwhelming fascination with the contradictory', a phenomenon analysed by Kay in *Courtly Contradictions* (p. 3). She argues that in the early saints' Lives 'contrariety flourishes . . . primarily as a structure of thought whereby the perspective of the saint is systematically opposed to that of the world' (p. 49). Indeed, Wace uses pairs of contrary terms to contrast Margaret's faith with the pagan religion of those around her. In addition to contrasting the two religions directly ('"Tu devreies estre enemi / A cez ydles que tu aores: / . . . / Le Rei del Ciel deis aorer" '; vv. 514–15, 517), Wace employs antithesis when describing each religion on its own in order both to express the extent of the deities' falseness or validity and to emphasise the proper attitude toward the gods. Margaret's full advice to Olybrius, cited in part above, illustrates both uses. First, she emphatically claims that his attitude

towards the pagan deities is wrong (vv. 514–15). Next, she shows, through antithesis, the totality of her god's power: ' "Le Rei del Ciel deis aorer / Qui damner te puet e salver" ' (vv. 517–18). By creating such a diametrical opposition between the deities and by identifying antithetical responses to each (enmity/adoration), Wace shows that compromise is impossible: one is either a misguided pagan or a spiritually enlightened Christian. Margaret's assertion of the range of God's powers implies that choosing the wrong religion leads inevitably to damnation.

We might be tempted to see this either/or structure in all of the oppositions of the text, especially since Wace uses the same rhetorical figure (antithesis) to emphasise a number of contrasts. However, a somewhat different kind of differentiation obtains between the other main oppositions: body/soul, pain/pleasure, this life/the afterlife. At first, Olybrius's and Margaret's pronouncements about the saint's choice between life as the prefect's lover and death by torture do seem to be based on purely contrary relationships (vv. 155–66). For the tyrant, the body can be either in pain or in pleasure. Within vv. 155–66 he expresses this opinion all the more forcefully through his use of repetitive structures, most notably ' "En feu ardant tun cors metrai" ' (v. 158) and ' "Dedenz mun lit te cucherai" ' (v. 162), and of verbs (vv. 156, 160). The saint's rebuttal does not directly contradict Olybrius's assertion, but by dismissing physical pleasure as 'nothing' (*neient*) and adding another element, the soul, she suggests that her choice between pain and pleasure is a choice between protecting her body or protecting her soul. The exchange thus establishes pain/pleasure and body/soul as important (and, at first glance, contrary) pairs. After her subsequent beating, Margaret expresses the oppositions even more forcefully:

> Se mun cors tun talent faiseit,
> M'armë en feu ardent ireit.
> Ma char voil que seit turmentee
> Que m'arme seit el Ciel salvee. (vv. 269–72)

In articulating on this occasion the consequences of both options, Margaret makes it clear that Olybrius's two offers amount to the same thing: torture, either in this life or the next. Torture in this life, however, can lead to the only pleasure she acknowledges: eternal life in heaven.

Wace's nuanced use of antithesis allows him to present the saint's choices in unambiguous terms, while at the same time suggesting that contraries are, in large part, a feature of terrestrial life, which Christians can transcend by working for their salvation. It is clear that Margaret has only one

right choice, the preservation of the soul and the destruction of the body, but her decision to allow her body to be destroyed can eventually lead to the body's eternal preservation. Throughout the poem, this type of transformation of contraries into paradoxes ensures that the audience understands the complex relationship between body and soul. Wace not only associates the body with pain and with sinful pleasure, but also shows the body's important role in the saint's quest for salvation. The lessons highlighted by the antitheses are, then, that Christians must choose to reject idolatry and must actively and physically pursue the salvation of their souls.

Like the poets who were to follow him, Wace employs the rhyme and rhythm patterns of his work to heighten the drama and to make the essential details and teachings of the story more memorable. The *Margaret* is not the oldest surviving text composed in octosyllabic couplets (the form that would come to dominate vernacular French narrative), but it is the earliest saint's Life in that form. Even if Wace's use of the couplet is not innovative, his treatment of the form nonetheless demonstrates his significant skills as a poet. His modifications to the rhyme and rhythm patterns show a level of comfort and sophistication that lend further support to the argument that octosyllabic couplets were extensively used long before they were written down in the surviving manuscripts.[61] Although Le Saux claims that 'the sense unit is clearly the line or the couplet' and that 'the rhythm is regular, with a clear pause at the end of each line' (*Companion*, p. 15), a closer look reveals that Wace plays extensively with variations in phrasing, as well as with enjambment and repeated rhymes. In fact, even though there are frequently pauses at the end of lines, nearly two-thirds of the lines (468 out of 748) are part of sentences that extend for more than a couplet; even short sentences regularly break the couplet. While the audience, therefore, would clearly hear the rhymes, the rhyme would not dominate in an incantatory fashion.

Wace exploits the possibilities of linking more or fewer lines, both to enhance the text's drama and to emphasise important points. At almost all of the dramatic moments, single-line sentences quicken the narrative pace. For example, he recounts the sudden appearance of the dragon and describes its horrible mien in rapid-fire pronouncements (vv. 307–14).

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[61] E. G. R. Waters, an early editor of the *Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*, remarks that 'the technical perfection attained by the author indicates that he was using a well-established form' (p. xxix, cited in Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Orality and Performance*, p. 13).

Elsewhere, the single lines convey the brutality of Margaret's opponents, including her infidel father (vv. 22–25). However, Wace uses longer phrasing to express the cruelty and persistence of Margaret's torturers, as in the scene of the saint's beating (vv. 187–92). He combines short and long phrasing, as in the prologue where he first describes his material in an eight-line sentence and then quickly inserts two single-line sentences to call attention to the saint's name (vv. 9–10). Similarly, the saint's final prayer, in which she provides directions to her devotees, consists almost entirely of long phrases, but Wace stresses the key information—Margaret is the patron saint of healthy births—through the use of short phrases (single couplets) that each express a complete idea:

> Ne seit ja nez en lur maisun
> Enfes se a dreit terme nun;
> Li enfes sains e entiers seit
> Naturalment si cum est dreit. (vv. 643–46)

Moreover, as Le Saux notes, Wace highlights, by means of enjambment, the child who is protected (*Companion*, p. 16). The dozen or so instances of enjambment in the poem predominantly serve to call attention to Margaret's virtues: e.g. 'Ne volt unques sun cuer retraire / De Deu servir, car nel dut faire' (vv. 7–8); 'Voluntiers e bien li garda / Sa chasteé qu'el li voa' (vv. 17–18); 'Mais la croiz qu'ot faite de Crist / Crut el dragun, crever le fist' (vv. 337–38). Perhaps most notably, when the dove comes to announce Margaret's future glory, its speech contains no fewer than three enjambments (vv. 391–400). The rhythm of the speech is almost prosaic, which makes it stand out noticeably from the rest of the Life (the dove's subsequent speech conforms to the regular phrasing of the text), thereby giving it significant force and authority. In addition to phrasing and enjambment, Wace also uses repeated rhymes at several key moments of the text, which form quatrains that break the rhythm of the octosyllabic couplets. Grossel, who has studied these quatrains in Wace's Lives, argues that they are a conscious procedure and that they become much more frequent in the later works, which have seventeen apiece ('Wace, traducteur des vies de saint', p. 213).

The effort of previous critics to demonstrate that the *Margaret* is Wace's first work has led to an over-emphasis on the poem's simplicity and its poet's immaturity. Grossel, for example, suggests that the author of the Life is a 'traducteur fidèle et quelque peu scrupuleux' ('faithful and somewhat scrupulous translator'), who will only later become 'un artiste, très conscient de sa valeur et de ses moyens' ('an artist, very conscious of

his worth and his techniques', p. 202). As the preceding stylistic analysis indicates, even if the *Margaret* represents Wace's earliest effort, he was already perfectly capable of wielding rhetorical and poetic devices to significant effect.

Conclusion

Wace's *Life of St Margaret* deserves a good deal more consideration than it has hitherto received, and not only on the grounds of its status as one of the earliest French texts and as the first surviving vernacular witness to Margaret's patronage of women in labour. Too frequently scholars have evaluated it, like the other accounts of Margaret's life, according to irrelevant criteria, for example by looking for historical accuracy in a literary text. Alternatively, they have derived inaccurate assessments of it based on generalisations and too hasty readings, such as the judgement that Margaret, as a virgin martyr, is the victim of a rape plot. Even many of those who have engaged in the legitimate effort of determining the position of the *Margaret* among Wace's works have been led to undervalue the poem. The preceding comments, however, reveal some of the real literary merits of this poem as well as its value as a reflection of contemporary attitudes toward a number of topics: most notably, the value of the physical body for salvation, the relationships between gender and power, the corporeality of demons, the veneration of the saints, the logic of saintly patronage and, of course, the cult of Margaret herself.

Although a relatively simple work in its language and structure, the *Margaret* is a well-crafted composition that illustrates Wace's gift for dramatic narrative, his dry sense of humour and his skill in fusing edification and entertainment. The particular strategies he uses and, even more, the ways in which he makes use of them, reflect the developing changes in spirituality and literary culture that will characterise the twelfth century. The earlier French Lives, through the rhythmic regularity of their assonanced stanzas and the mystical treatment of the saint's choices, convey the clerkly authority of their narrators and evoke a receptive and docile audience. In contrast, the variety of rhythms, the lyrical expressions of the saint's love for God, the apostrophes to the audience and the attention to spiritual teaching as well as to storytelling in the *Margaret* suggest a poet who seeks to engage and persuade the audience. Unlike his predecessors, Wace establishes his authority not only through the confidence

of his narrator or the authenticity of his sources but also through his skill in composing a persuasive and entertaining poem.

This skill is perhaps even more apparent in the way Wace delicately moulds the sensational aspects of the material—the dragon, the violent torture—to teach important moral lessons. Thus the dragon and Olybrius together show the demonic threat posed by idolatry, which is excessive devotion to the physical world and not merely a bygone pagan phenomenon. Conversely, Margaret's victory over the demons and her resistance to the tyrant demonstrate the tremendous strength the faithful can attain by loving God, triumphs that are all the more miraculous since she achieves them as a young, orphaned girl. Although Wace takes full advantage of the dramatic potential of these elements, he does so with characteristic attention to practical issues. He thereby both avoids the problematic aspects of the legend (such as the real presence of the dragon) and conveys the humanity of the saint. By making the saint more human, God's presence more loving and the narrative more coherent, Wace seems to have substantially reworked the Latin tradition pertaining to Margaret, at least as it appears in *BHL* 5303 and 5306, his putative sources. The new emphasis on the relationships within the text and between the text and the audience further vernacularise the material, celebrating a community of faithful rather than reinforcing hierarchical distinctions.

The audience that Wace's *Margaret* evokes appears largely to belong already to the wider community of Margaret's devotees, one that has, by the twelfth century, existed for some three hundred years or more. Wace makes no reference to needing to educate his readers or listeners, as he does in the other works in the present volume, and nothing in his version diverges strikingly from earlier Lives of Margaret, suggesting the audience's familiarity with the material. Significantly, however, Wace wrote his version just as the already well-developed cult was on the verge of tremendous expansion, and his is the oldest surviving vernacular Life to include Margaret's patronage of women in labour, an association that seems to be the source of her extraordinary popularity in the thirteenth century. Wace's decision to include this information may indicate a desire to reach a female audience, especially since, in the epilogue, he singles women out as devotees. Even more, it points to the breadth of the audience, who, as people concerned with childbirth, clearly belong to the laity.

That Wace succeeded in appealing to a broad audience is evident from the manuscript tradition of the Life. The three surviving manuscripts

suggest the existence of at least six copies, which indicates a significant popularity, especially since only one other of the fourteen verse Lives of Margaret in Old French exists in more than one copy. The fact that Wace's *Margaret* continued to be copied even after the *Apres la sainte Passion* version had gained wide popularity further attests to the appeal of Wace's work. When he composed the *Margaret*, Wace may not yet have been able (or was simply unwilling) to call himself 'maistre', but he nonetheless demonstrates considerable mastery of his art.

Ci cumence la vie sainte Marguerite

A l'onur Deu et a s'aïe[62]
Dirai d'une virge la vie,
D'une dameisele saintisme
Qui s'amur ot vers Deu haltisme
Et sun pensé si fermement
Que pur peine ne pur turment
Ne volt unques sun cuer retraire
De Deu servir, car nel dut faire.
Assez fu gente et assez bele,
Marguerite ot num la pucele.
Ce m'est avis que par raisun
Dut ele bien aveir cel num,
Que bien resembla margerie
De sa belté e de sa vie:
Cum el fu geme precïuse,
Ancele Deu fu et espuse;
Voluntiers e bien li garda
Sa chasteé qu'el li voa.
De grant gent fu emparentee
En Antioche dunt fu nee.
Ses peres ert bien gentils om,
Theodosïus aveit num;
Prestre ert de la mahomerie,
Les ydles aveit en baillie.
Patriarche d'iluec esteit,
Grant onur en la vile aveit,
Mais paiens ert, car en cel tens
N'aveit il gaires crestïens.
Quel lei que ses peres tenist
Ne que que il i mescreïst,
Del Saint Esprit fu replenie,
Ancele Deu fu et amie.
Pres d'Antioche fu menee,
A nurice fu cumandee;
Sa nurice forment ı'ama,
Cume sa fille la garda.
Encore esteit assez petite
Bune pucele Marguerite,
Quant la mere qui la porta
Chaï en mal, si devia.
Tant fu ele plus servisable
Et envers sa nurice estable.
Crestïene esteit lealment,
En Deu creeit omnipotent,
En Deu creeit et aoreit

[62] For details concerning the reconstruction of the text, see Notes to Keller's Text below.

In honour of God and with his help*
I shall relate the life of a virgin,*
A most holy maiden,
Whose love and thoughts were fixed
On God most high so steadfastly
That, in spite of pain and suffering,
She was never willing to withdraw her heart
From God's service, for she could not do so.
The maiden was very noble and very beautiful
And her name was Margaret.
It appears to me that by right
She should have this name,
For she was just like a pearl
In her beauty and in her life.
As she was a precious gem,*
She was God's handmaiden and spouse;
Willingly and well did she preserve for him
Her chastity, which she pledged to him.
She was from a noble family
In Antioch, where she was born.
Her father was a most noble man
And his name was Theodosius.*
He was a priest of the pagan temple*
And he watched over the idols.
He was patriarch of that place
And greatly honoured in the town;
But he was a pagan, for at that time
There were scarcely any Christians.
Whichever faith her father held,
Or whatever false beliefs he had,
She was filled with the Holy Ghost
And was the handmaiden and friend of God.
She was taken to a place near Antioch
And entrusted to a nurse;
Her nurse loved her dearly
And looked after her like her own daughter.
The good maiden Margaret
Was still very small
When the mother who bore her
Fell ill and died.
Then Margaret was all the more zealous
And completely devoted to her nurse.
She was a loyal Christian
And believed in God Almighty;
She believed in God and worshipped him,

E de bun cuer se li prieit.
Theodosïus, quant ce oï
Qu'en Deu creeit, mult l'enhaï;
Ne la volt tenir entur sei
Quant el ne volt tenir sa lei.
Pur ce que relinqui aveit
La lei que ses peres teneit,
Ensi enama altre vie,
Dunt ses peres l'ot enhaïe,
Que del sien ne de s'erité
Ne pot aveir cumunité.
Ne li n'en pot gaires chaleir
De l'amur de sun pere aveir
Quant l'amur de celui ot bien
Qui sires est de tute rien.
Ele ama Deu e Deus l'ama,
Trestut sun cuer li adona;
Deu aora e Deu ot chier,
Il l'en rendi mult bun loier.
De .XV. ans esteit la meschine,
Vers sa nurice tute acline.
A cel tens, si cum nus lisum,
Esteit granz persecutïun
De martirs per tut le païs;
Suvent erent pris et ocis
Pur l'amur Deu en qui creeient,
En cui lur cuer turné aveient.
Quant oï Marguerite dire
E le turment e le martire
Que cil pur amur Deu sufreient
Qui tant l'ameient e creeient,
Voa a nostre Creatur
A estre chaste pur s'amur;
E Deus ama sa chasteé,
Si la maintint en grant bunté.
Al champ aleit, berbis gardeit,
Car sa nurice le vuleit;
O meschines de son aage
Meneit berbis en pasturage.
Olibrïus .I. jur la vit,
Berbis gardeit, ce dit l'escrit.
Olibrïus pruvoz esteit,
En Antioche veneit dreit,
De Rome aveit la pruvosté;
Partut aveit grant pöesté

And prayed to him with open heart.
When Theodosius heard
That she believed in God, he hated her greatly;
He did not want to keep her near him,
Since she refused to keep his faith.
Because she had abandoned
The faith her father held,
And was thus devoted to another way of life,
Her father had conceived a hatred for her
Such that she would have no part
Of his wealth and his inheritance.
But she had little need to be concerned
About having her own father's love,
Since she had the love of him
Who is lord over all things.
She loved God and God loved her;
She devoted her whole heart to him,
Worshipped God and held God dear,
And for this he gave her a fine reward.
The girl was fifteen years old
And had great affection for her nurse.
At that time, as we read,
There was a great persecution
Of martyrs throughout the land.
They were often captured and killed
For the love of God, in whom they believed
And to whom they had turned their hearts.
When Margaret heard tell of
The torment and the pain
That was being suffered for the love of God
By those who loved him so and believed in him,
She vowed to our Creator
To be chaste out of love for him;
God loved her chastity
And supported her in great goodness.
She went into the fields, keeping the sheep,
For this is what her nurse wanted;
With girls of her own age
She took sheep to pasture.
One day Olybrius saw her;*
She was keeping the sheep, as the book states,
Olybrius was prefect
And heading straight for Antioch.*
He had the post of prefect in Rome
And had great power everwhere

De crestïens faire pener
Et les ydles faire aorer.
En chaïnes de fer lieit
Les crestïens que il preneit.
Grant cumpaigne de chevaliers
Meneit o lui e d'escuiers.
Marguerite vit, si l'ama.
Par ses chevaliers li manda
Que sa muillier de li fereit
Se ele franche feme esteit;
E se ele ert altrui ancele,
Pur ço qu'ele ert e gente e bele
En soignantage la tendreit;
Del sien a grant plenté avreit.
Cil vunt la trestut maintenant,
Si la prïent mult erramment.
Ele prit mult fort a plurer
E Jhesum Crist a apeler:
'Aies, Sire, merci de mei!
Maintien mei', dist ele, 'a ta lei,
Ne perde m'ame o les feluns
Qui funt les persecutïuns.
Fai mei, bels Sire, delivrer
Que tuz tens te puisse aorer,
Que ma fei ne seit empiree
Ne la meie ame cunchïee,
Ma sainteé ne seit müee
Ne la chasteé que t'ai vöee.
Salve mei, Deus, et si m'aïe
E me soccur de felunie!'
Li chevalier revindrent tost
E raconterent al pruvost
Que la meschine qu'il vuleit
A sun ués pas ne cuveneit,
Car ele creit en icel Dé
Que Juï ont en croiz pené.
Olibrïus se curuça,
A sei venir la cumanda.
Quant devant lui fu amenee:
'De quelle gent', dit il, 'fus nee?'
Cele respont: 'De franche gent.
D'Antioche sunt mi parent'.
'Or me di cument tu as num.'
'Marguerite m'apele l'on.'
'Quel deu', dist il, 'aores tu?'

To make Christians suffer
And to make them worship idols.
In iron chains he bound
Those Christians he captured.
Along with him he had
A large company of knights and squires.
He saw Margaret and fell in love with her.
Through his knights he sent her word
That he would make her his wife,
If she were a woman of free birth,
And if she were someone else's handmaiden,
Then, because she was both gracious and beautiful,
He would keep her as his concubine;
She would have an abundance of his wealth.
They went to her at once
And begged her forthwith.
She began to weep profusely
And to call upon Jesus Christ:
'O Lord, have mercy on me!*
Keep me', she said, 'true to your commandments;
May I not lose my soul with the evildoers
Who carry out these persecutions.
Bring about my deliverance, fair Lord,
So that I can worship you always,
So that my faith is not harmed
Nor my soul besmirched,
And let my holiness not be altered,
Nor the chastity I have pledged to you.
Save me, O God, help me
And keep me from wickedness.'
The knights soon returned
And told the prefect
That the girl he wanted
Was not suitable for him,
For she believed in that god
Whom the Jews had made suffer on the cross.*
Olybrius became angry
And ordered her to come to him.
When she was brought before him, he said:
'Of what people were you born?'
She replied: 'Of a noble family;
My parents are from Antioch'.
'Now tell me your name.'
'I am called Margaret.'
'What god', he said, 'do you worship?'

'Je crei', dist ele, 'el rei Jhesu.'
'Creis tu', dist il, 'en Jhesu Crist
Que la gent as Juïs ocist?'
'Oïl', dist ele, 'en celui crei;
Cil seit tuz tens garde de mei!'
'Cument', dist il, 'te puet aidier
Qui se laissa crucefïer?'
La virge dist: 'Se il vulsist,
Ja nuls uem mal ne li feïst,
Mais il li plot ensi murir
Pur sun pueple de mort garir.
Tu ne savras ja tant parler
Que tu me faces returner
De la veie de verité
Par quei je vois a Damnedé;
A celui pur veir me sui prise
Qui trestut a en sa justise.'
Li pruvoz dist ireement:
'Ja me diras pruchainement:
Se noz deus ne vels aorer,
Je te ferai vilment pener;
A turment murir te ferai,
En feu ardant tun cors metrai.
Se tun deu guerpis e ta lei,
Richement remandras o mei,
Riche feme de tei ferai,
Dedenz mun lit te cucherai'.
La virge dist: 'Ce n'est neient.
Mun cors lairai metre a turment
Pur ce que m'ame seit salvee
Et o les virges seit posee.
De Deu ne vueil je departir,
Del tut me vueil a li tenir;
Bien li tendrai ceste pramesse,
Je n'en serai ja menteresse;
Bien deit on pur celui murir
Qui pur nus tuz volt mort sufrir.'
Li pruvoz prist a curucier
E Marguerite a manacier;
Cumanda qu'el fust halt pendue
Et o verges nue batue.
La virge vers le ciel garda,
A sun seignur Jhesu parla:
'En tei ai m'esperance eüe,
Ja ne serai mais cunfundue.

'I believe', she said, 'in Jesus the King.'
'Do you believe', he said, 'in Jesus Christ,
Whom the Jewish race killed?'*
'Yes', she said, 'I believe in that one.
May he take care of me always.'
'How can he help you', he said,
'He who allowed himself to be crucified?'
The virgin said: 'If he had wished it,
No one would ever have harmed him,
But it pleased him to die in that way
In order to save his people from death.
You will never succeed with words
In making me turn away from
The path of truth
By which I go to God;
I have truly committed myself to him
Who has everything under his control.'
The prefect said angrily:
'You will soon give me your decision.
If you refuse to worship our gods,
I shall make you suffer dreadfully.
I shall put you to death by torture
And place your body in a burning fire.
If you abandon your god and your faith,
You will remain with me in splendour;
I shall make a wealthy woman of you
And place you in my bed.'
The virgin said: 'That is of no consequence.
I shall allow my body to be tortured
So that my soul will be saved
And placed with the virgins.
I do not wish to abandon God;
I wish to be true to him with my whole being,
Keep this promise to him
And never become a liar.
It is right to die for him
Who was willing to suffer death for all of us.'
The prefect began to get angry
And to threaten Margaret;
He ordered her to be strung up high
And beaten, naked, with rods.
The virgin looked up towards heaven
And spoke to Jesus her lord:
'In you I have had my hope
And I shall never be defeated.

Sire, beneeiz seit tes nums,
In secula seculorum. AMEN
De mei, bels Sire, aies merci,
Si me garde de l'Enemi
Que je ne face pur paür
Chose dunt je perde t'amur.'
Quant ele ot faite s'oreisun,
Li juge erent tut envirun,
Qui le cors li unt tant batu
O les verges tut nu a nu
Qu'a la tere chaeit li sans
Par les costes e par les flans.
Olibrïus li vint devant,
A Margerite dist itant:
'Se a mei entendre vuleies
E mei amer, pru i avreies'.
Tels i aveit qui l'esgardeient
Qui pur pitié de li plureient,
Pur la peine qu'ele sufreit
E pur le sanc que jus chaeit.
Uns d'els li dist: 'Pitié avum
De tei que turmenter veüm.
Pur quei es tu si mescreüe?
Quel pru avras se on te tue?
Prise t'a li pruvoz en ire,
Mult se haste de tun martire.
Pur quei ne fais que puisses vivre
Et estrë e saine e delivre?'
Margueritë a respundu:
'Haï! felun e mescreü
Qui tant savez mal cunseillier,
Alez, faites vostre mestier!
Je ne criem pas vostre manace
Que nuls de vus, pur Deu, me face.
Se mes cors est en peine mis,
M'ame sera en Paradis;
Pur les peines que ot li cors
M'ame sera de peine fors.
En Deu del Ciel devez tuit creire,
Car ce est la creance veire,
Qui les portes de Paradis
Uevrë et i met ses amis.
Felun, ja mais ne vus crerai
Ne ja voz deus n'aorerai
Qui ne parolent ne ne oient,

Lord, blessed be your names,
In saecula saeculorum. AMEN.*
Have mercy on me, fair Lord,
And preserve me from the Enemy,
So that I shall not do anything out of fear
For which I would lose your love.'
When she had finished her prayer,
She was surrounded by the judges
Who beat her body so much,
With rods applied directly to her naked body,
That her blood ran down on to the ground
From her sides and her ribs.*
Olybrius came before her
And said to Margaret:
'If you were willing to listen to me
And love me, it would be to your advantage'.
There were those who looked at her
And wept for her out of pity,
Because of the pain she was suffering
And the blood that was running down her.
One of them said to her: 'We feel pity
For you whom we are seeing tortured.
Why are you such an unbeliever?
What advantage is it for you if you are killed?
The prefect has become angry with you;
He is very eager to make you suffer.
Why do you not act so that you can live
And be in good health and free?'
Margaret replied:
'O evildoers and infidels,
Who are so skilled at giving bad advice,
Go on, be about your business!
I am not afraid of the threats
That any of you make against me, for the love of God.
If my body is subjected to pain,
My soul will be in paradise;
Because of the pains my body suffers
My soul will be free of pain.
All of you ought to believe in God in heaven,
For that is true belief,
Which opens the gates of paradise
And lets in those who are his friends.
Evildoers, I shall never put my trust in you,
Nor shall I ever worship your gods,
Who do not speak or hear,

Ne les oilz uevrent ne ne clöent,
Ne bien ne mal ne pöent faire
Ne rien dire ne rien retraire.
Aorer deit on celui Dé
Qui sur tuz a sa pöesté.
Tu, chiens, pruvoz hardis, senz hunte,
Quanque tu fais, riens ne te monte!
Diables sers de ta puissance,
A lur est tute ta creance.'
Lors fu li pruvoz pleins de rage,
Mua sun estre e sun curage:
Cumanda que fust halt levee
Et a verges aspres navree.
Marguerite fu a turment,
Reclama Deu omnipotent:
'Dune mei, Deus, force et aïe
Et esperance e jur de vie
Que m'orisun puisse finer
Et aprés en ta gloire entrer.
La columbe del Ciel m'enveie
Par cui haitiee e ferme seie,
Que je puisse ma chasteé
Garder e ma virginité.
Je ne criem rien mon aversaire
Ne mal que il me puisse faire.'
Marguerite ert en oreisun,
Sa char li batent li felun.
Olibrïus e l'altre gent
Qui o lui erent al turment,
Quant il veient de la char tendre
De tutes pars le sanc espandre,
Lur oilz e lur chieres cuvreient,
Que esgarder ne la poeient.
Li pruvoz vint devant li dreit:
'Por quei ne fais', dist il, 'que deit?
Por quei n'as tu merci de tei?
Fai ce que voil e si me crei:
Noz deus aore bunement
Ainz que muires si malement.
Se vols vivre, fai mun talent
Que ne muires si malement.'
Cele respunt hardiement:
'Je ne ferai ja tun talent!
Se mun cors tun talent faiseit,
M'armë en feu ardent ireit.

Nor open their eyes or close them;
They can do no good or evil,
Say anything or make any reply.*
One should worship that God
Who has power over everyone.
You, dog, bold and shameless prefect,
Whatever you do, it will bring you no profit!
Your power is at the service of devils,
Your belief is entirely in them.'
Then the prefect was filled with rage;
He changed his mind and his intentions.*
He ordered her to be strung up
And wounded with cruel rods.
While Margaret was suffering,
She called on God Almighty:
'O God, give me strength and succour,
Hope and respite,
So that I can finish my prayer
And then enter into your glory.
Send me the dove of heaven
So that I might have joy and strength from it,
And be able to preserve
My chastity and my purity.
I have no fear of my adversary,
Nor of any harm he can do me.'
While Margaret was at prayer,
The evildoers beat her flesh.
When Olybrius, and the other people
Who were present at her suffering,
Saw the blood spilling from all parts
Of her tender flesh,
They covered their eyes and their faces,
For they could not look at her.
The prefect came right up to her:
'Why', he said, 'do you not do as you should?
Why do you not take pity on yourself?
Do what I want and put your trust in me.
Worship our gods appropriately
Before you die in so dreadful a fashion.
If you want to live, do my bidding
So that you do not die so terribly.'
She replied boldly:
'I shall never do your bidding!
If my body did your bidding,
My soul would enter a burning fire.

Ma char voil que seit turmentee
Que m'arme seit el Ciel salvee.'
La virge fu en grief turment,
Sa char nuirent espessement,
Que l'entraille qui est el cors
Par les plaies pendeit defors.
Tant fu batue lungement
Que le cors ot trestut sanglent.
Puis fu en la chartre menee,
Tute sule fu enfermee;
Lors fist signe de croiz sur sei:
Ce est li signes de nostre lei.
Dunt cumença ceste oreisun:
'Deus, qui ne veis rien se bien nun,
Veirs jugierre, veire lumiere,
Oi ma complainte, oi ma prïere.
Je n'ai surur ne je n'ai frere,
Ne nul enfant n'ot plus ma mere
Qui me porta; or m'a guerpie,
Mais tu ne me deguerpir mie.
A tort ai, Sire, cest turment,
A tei me cumplain sulement.
Fai que puisse chacier en veie
Mun enemi qui me guerreie,
Qui les crestïens fait pener,
Que ensemble lui puisse aler.'*
La virge acostumeement
Ceste oreisun faiseit suvent.
La nurice a la chartre aleit
E pain e vin li aporteit
E duneit par une fenestre
Par u ele veeit sun estre,
E les oreisuns reteneit
Que Marguerite dire oeit.
Un jur ses oreisuns faiseit
Marguerite, si cum suleit,
Issir vit d'un angle .i. dragun;
Neirs ert e d'orible façun,
Feu ardant par sun nés geteit,
Fer tut neir a sun col porteit;
La barbe ot d'or, les denz d'argent,
Les ueilz ot vairs cume a serpent,
Puor faiseit entur li grant;
Glaive aveit en sa main tranchant.
Curuça sei e si sifla,

I want my flesh to be tortured
So that my soul can be saved in heaven.'
The virgin was subjected to cruel torture;
They damaged her flesh repeatedly,
So that the entrails of her body
Were hanging out through her wounds.
She was beaten for such a long time
That her whole body was all covered in blood.
Then she was taken to the prison
And locked in all alone.
She made the sign of the cross over herself:
That is the sign of our faith.
Then she began this prayer:
'O God, who sees nothing but good,
True judge, true light,
Hear my plea, hear my prayer.
I have neither sister nor brother,
And no other child was born to my mother*
Who bore me; now she has abandoned me,
But you do not abandon me.
Wrongly, O Lord, do I suffer this torture;
To you alone do I address this plea.
Help me to drive away
My enemy, who is waging war on me
And who is making Christians suffer,
And let me do battle with him.'*
The virgin repeated this prayer
Over and over again.
The nurse went to the prison,
Took her bread and wine
And gave them to her through a window
Through which she could see how she fared,
And she remembered the prayers
That she heard Margaret reciting.
One day Margaret was saying her prayers,
As was her custom,
When from a corner she saw a dragon emerge;
It was black and horrible in appearance,
And it spewed forth burning fire through its nose.
Around its neck it bore an iron chain, completely black,
It had a beard of gold and teeth of silver,
And its eyes were sparkling like a serpent's.
It gave off a great stench all around it
And in its hand it carried a sharp sword.
It became angry, let out a whistling sound

Par la chartre grant feu geta.
Paür ot la virge e pesance,
Mais en Deu aveit sa fiance.
A la terre s'agenuilla,
Mains estendues, si ora:
'Deus', dist ele, 'qui puez salver
E ciel e tere et air e mer,
Par tut es tu .i. deus meïsme
Qui pöesté as en abisme
E a la mer rive donas,
Enfer brisas, Sathan lias,
Pri tei que oies m'oreisun
Que puisse vaincre cest felun,
Que il mal ne me puisse faire
Ne a sa fosse avuec lui traire.'
Ez vus celui, gule baee!
A bien prés l'a tute engulee
Quant Marguerite se seigna
E de la sainte croiz s'arma.
Li diables la gule uvri,
Tute a bien prés la transgluti,
Mais la croiz qu'ot faite de Crist
Crut el dragun, crever le fist;
Del dragun Marguerite issi
Qui unques nul mal n'i senti.
Devers senestre se turna,
Un altre diable esgarda,
Qui aveit les mains e les piez
E les genuils estreit lïez.
Dunt dist la virge a sun Seignur
A qui ele ot turné s'amur:
'Je glorefi tun num e tei,
Car le diable vencu vei
E sa puor ariere mise
Dunt je quideie estre susprise.
La croiz Jhesu vei reluisant,
Sur mei bunes odurs metant.
La columbe est del Ciel venue
Que pur cunfort ai atendue;
C'est Saint Esprit que j'atendeie,
Que je sur tutes riens voleie.
A tei, Sire, graces en rent,
A cui tuit unt refuiement,
Qui des virges es governere,
Corune as martirs e salvere,

And cast great fire throughout the prison.
The virgin was frightened and distressed,
But her faith was in God.
She knelt on the ground,
With hands outstretched, and prayed:
'O God', she said, 'who can save
Heaven and earth, air and sea,
You are everywhere the one true God,
Who has power in hell
And who provided the sea with its shores,*
You broke hell and put Satan in chains.
I beg you to listen to my prayer,
So that I can vanquish this evildoer,
In order that he cannot do me any harm
Nor drag me with him to his pit.'
Lo, there was the dragon, its mouth gaping!
It had almost swallowed her up
When Margaret signed herself
And armed herself with the holy cross.
The devil opened its mouth
And almost swallowed her entirely,
But the cross of Christ she had made
Grew within the dragon and caused it to burst.
Margaret, who had not suffered any harm,
Emerged from the dragon;
She turned to the left
And caught sight of another devil,
Who had his hands, feet
And knees tightly bound.
Then the virgin said to her Lord
To whom she had directed her love:
'I glorify you and your name,
For I see the devil vanquished
And his stench driven back
By which I expected to be overcome.
I can see the cross of Jesus resplendent,
Spreading fine aromas over me.
The dove, which I have awaited for my comfort,
Has come down from heaven;
It is the Holy Ghost, which I have been waiting for
And which I have desired above all things.
I give thanks to you for this, O Lord,
You who provide a refuge for everyone and
Who rule over virgins
And are the king and saviour for martyrs,

Qui vis e regnes, ce creüm,
In secula seculorum.' AMEN.
Li diables leva dunc sus:
'Ne m'anguissier', dist il, 'ja plus.
Marguerite, lai mei atant,
Que ne me voises plus sivant,
Car je te vei en oreisun,
Manable et en aflictiun.
Mun frere t'enveiai Rufun,*
Qui en semblance ert de dragun;
Le cors de tei assorbesist
E ta virginité tolsist,
Mais tu l'as par la croiz ocis,
Tun vengement as de lui pris.
De mei te pri tant sulement
Que tu ne faces ensement.'
Dunt l'a la virge as chevels pris
E cuntre tere l'a jus mis;
A la tere l'a jus plaissié
E sur le chief li mist le pié,
Puis dist: 'Draguns, or aies pais;
Ne t'entremetes tu jamais
De tolir ma virginité:
Je suis espuse Damnedé'.
N'aveit encor pas tut ce dit
Quant le soleil reluire vit
Dedenz la chartre u ele esteit
O le dragun qu'ele teneit.
La sus el ciel vit la croiz Crist
U sist la columbe qui dist:
'Beneüree virge es tu,
Marguerite, qui as vencu
Le dragun, que crever feïs,
E cel que suz tun pié as mis.
Pur ce que ta virginité
As cunfermee a Damnedé
E tuz tens as Deu en memoire,
Est ta corune preste en gloire,
En Paradis, u el t'atent;
N'i a negun encumbrement.'
Quant Marguerite ce oï,
A Damnedé graces rendi.
Al diable se returna,
Hardiement li demanda
Sun num li die e ses mestiers.

And live and reign, this we believe,
In saecula saeculorum.' AMEN.*
The devil then rose:
'Do not distress me any further', he said,
'Margaret, leave me alone
And do not continue to pursue me,
For I see you at prayer,
Steadfast and in supplication.
I sent you my brother Rufo,*
Who took on the appearance of a dragon;
He should have swallowed you
And robbed you of your virginity,*
But you slew him with the cross
And took your revenge on him.
For myself I merely beg you
Not to do the same to me.'
Then the virgin grabbed him by the hair
And cast him down to the ground;
She pushed him to the ground
And placed her foot on his head.*
Then she said: 'Dragon, now be at peace;
Never again try
To rob me of my virginity.
I am the spouse of the Lord God.'
She had not yet finished saying all this
When she saw the sun shining
In the prison where she was,
Along with the dragon she was holding.
Up there in heaven she saw the cross of Christ*
Where the dove was sitting, which said:
'You are a blessed virgin,
Margaret, you who have vanquished
The dragon that you made burst open,
As well as the one you placed beneath your foot.
Because you have pledged
Your virginity to the Lord God
And are mindful of God at all times,
Your crown is ready in glory,
In paradise where it awaits you;
Nothing stands in the way of this.'
When Margaret heard this,
She gave thanks to the Lord God.
She turned to the devil
And boldly asked him
To tell her his name and his profession.

Cil respont: 'Dame, volentiers
Te dirai ce que tu voldras,
Mais tun pié que sur mun chief as
Fai un petitet sozlever
Que je puisse un poi alener'.
La virge fist ce qu'il preia,
Un petitet sun pié lascha.
'Belsabut', dist il, 'ai a num,*
Ne fais se mei cumbatre nun
Cuntre les humes de cest munt
De quel mestier qu'il unques sunt;
Ainc mais ne poi estre vencuz.
Mais tu me froisses mes vertuz,
Tu sule m'as tut avuglé
E mun frere Rufun tüé;
Bien vei que Crist maint dedenz tei,
Tun plaisir puez faire de mei.
Des que tu crestïene fus
E que tu crestienté eüs,
La celestial compaignie,
Gloire enz el Ciel as deservie.
Marguerite, bele es e gente,
En Damnedé as mis t'entente,
Le signe Deu en tes deis as,
Par quei me venquis e lias.
Je sui cil qui tuz jurs senz faille
O les buns humes faz bataille,
Lur uelz, lur sens faz oscurer
E lur saveir tot ublïer.
Icels que truis durmant esveil
E de pechier lur doins cunseil,
E quant je nes puis esveillier,
En lur durmant les faz pechier
E trestoz cels u jë ai part
Qui funt mun servisë e m'art.
E qui me sert plus volentiers
Est plus mes privez cunseilliers;
En celui faz je ma maisun
Cui je ai tolu s'ententïun.
Quant sainte gent e ferme vei,
Si m'en depart, dame, par fei.
Marguerite, tu m'as vencu,
Ta preiere m'a cunfundu.
Las mei, chaitif, maleüré!
Une virge m'a surmunté!

He replied: 'My lady, I shall
Gladly tell you what you want to know,
But your foot, which you have on my head,
Raise it slightly,
So that I can breathe a little'.
The virgin did what he asked of her
And released her foot slightly.
'Beelzebub', he said, 'is my name.*
I do nothing other than fight
Against the people of this world,
Whatever their profession;
I could never be defeated,
But you crush my strength.
You alone have blinded me completely
And killed my brother Rufo.
I can well see that Christ dwells within you;
You can do with me what you will.
From the time you became a Christian
And embraced Christianity,
The celestial company,
You have deserved glory in heaven.
Margaret, you are beautiful and gracious
And have set your mind on the Lord God.
You have the sign of God in your fingers,
Through which you defeated and bound me.
I am the one who constantly, without fail,
Does battle against good men;
I cloud their eyes and their wits,
And make them forget their wisdom.
Those I find asleep I awaken
And advise them how to sin,
And when I cannot awaken them,
I make them sin in their sleep,
Along with all those I take an interest in,
Who serve me and my designs.
And he who serves me most willingly
Is all the more my close adviser.
In him I make my home
Whose power of discernment I have stolen.
When I see holy and steadfast people,
I take my leave, my lady, truly.
Margaret, you have defeated me;
Your prayer has destroyed me.
Woe is me, wretched, unhappy one!
A virgin has overcome me.

Se uns produem vencu m'eüst,
Assez meindre hunte me fust!
Merveille ai de ceste pucele
Qui tant est avenant e bele,*
Qui a vencu sun parenté
E pere e mere de bunté.
De bunes vertuz aornee
L'a Deus a sei bien aturnee.
La voiz de li e la manace
Diable lie e dragun chace.
Mult valt petit nostre vertuz
Quant une virge m'a vencuz!'
Dunc respundi la virge sage:
'Di mei', fait ele, 'tun lignage
E qui te duna pöesté
De gaitier les anceles Dé'.
Li diables li respundi:
'Marguerite, primes me di
Dunt as tel sens e si fort fei
E cument Dex entra en tei
E dunt cez vertuz en tei sunt'.
Marguerite briément respont:
'Ce que je sai est de Deu grace;
Sun plaisir de mei fait e face'.
'Marguerite', fait il, 'entent
Ce que tu quiers dirai briément.
Nostre reis a num Sathanas,
Del Ciel chaï en Enfer bas;
Sathanas a num en Enfer
Qui el Ciel ot num Lucifer.*
Nos lignages saveir porreies
Se tu tuz les livres saveies.
Je n'en os pas a tei parler,
Car je vei Deus o tei ester.
Sul itant te pri e te quier
Quë o ta main ne me tuchier.
Mais un vaissel pren, si me lie
Cum Salamuns fist en sa vie;
Dedenz un vaissel nus enclost.
Puis vint de Babiluine un ost*
Qui Jherusalem essilla
E le vaissel trestut brisa;
Truver quida argent et or
Od alcun grant riche tresor.
Quant nus de cel vaissel eissimes,

If a man of worth had defeated me,
It would have been much less shameful for me.
I marvel at this maiden,
Who is so comely and beautiful,*
And who has surpassed her family,
Both father and mother, in goodness.
Adorned with fine virtues,
God has rightly drawn her to him.
Her voice and her threats
Bind the devil and chase away the dragon.
Our power is worth very little
When a virgin has defeated me.'
Then the wise virgin replied:
'Tell me', she said, 'about your lineage
And who gave you power
To lie in wait for the handmaidens of God'.
The devil replied to her:
'Margaret, first tell me
Where such sense and such strong faith come from,
And how God entered you,
And how these powers came to be in you'.
Margaret replied briefly:
'What I know is due to the grace of God;
He does what he likes with me, and may he continue to do so'.
'Margaret', he said, 'listen.
What you wish to know I shall tell you briefly.
Our king is called Satan;
He fell from heaven to hell below.
He whose name in hell is Satan
In heaven was called Lucifer.*
You would get to know about our lineages
If you knew all the books.*
I dare not speak to you of them,
For I see God standing with you.
I merely ask you then, and beg of you,
That you do not touch me with your hand.
But take a vessel and tie me up,
As Solomon did in his lifetime;
He enclosed us in a vessel.
Then there came an army from Babylon*
That destroyed Jerusalem
And shattered the vessel;
They expected to find silver and gold
Along with some huge amount of treasure.
When we emerged from this vessel,

Par tut le munt nus espandimes.'
Dunc li dist Marguerite: 'Tais!
N'ai soing de ta parole mais,
N'ai mais cure de tun sermun,
Ne dis se tricherie nun!'
Quant ot ce dit, si se seigna
E dist: 'Diable, ariere va!'
A itant la tere entruvri
E li diables enz chaï;
D'iluec s'en turna li diables
Qui n'i pot estre plus estables.
A l'altre jur fu desfermee
La virge et al pruvost menee.
'Marguerite', dist il, 'crei mei:
Reneie Jhesu e sa lei,
Si tien la lei que nus tenum
E crei les deus que nus creüm.'
Marguerite li respundi:
'Tu devreies estre enemi
A cez ydles que tu aores:
Si vils choses pur quei enores?
Le Rei del Ciel deis aorer
Qui damner te puet e salver.'
N'ot el pruvost que curucier:
Marguerite fist despuillier
E puis al cheval fust lever
E branduns entur alumer.
Cheval fust uns turmenz esteit
U on en chevalchuns seeit.
Quant la virge el cheval fust sist
E vit le feu ardant, si dist:
'Sire Deus, mon cuer esnie
Que n'i remaigne felunie!'
Olibrïus li a dunc dit:
'Murir t'estuet jusqu'a petit.
Mais pur quei te lairas murir
Quant tu de mort te puez garir?
Fai ce que voil, si te lairai.'
Dist Marguerite: 'Ne ferai'.
Dunc a fait cil feu aporter
Et entur branduns alumer;
De tutes parz li feus mis fu.
Mais Sainz Espriz par sa vertu
Esteint le feu e la chalur
Que la virgene n'ot dulur.

We spread out over the entire world.'*
Then Margaret said to him: 'Hold your tongue!
I have no more interest in what you say
And I no longer care to listen to your words;
What you say is nothing but trickery.'
When she had said this, she crossed herself
And said: 'Devil, get back!'*
Then the ground opened up
And the devil fell in;
The devil, who could no longer maintain
His footing, left that place.
The following day the virgin was released
And taken to the prefect.
'Margaret', he said, 'trust me.
Renounce Jesus and faith in him.
Observe the faith we observe
And believe in the gods we believe in.'
Margaret answered him:
'You ought to be the enemy
Of these idols you worship.
Why do you honour such vile things?
You ought to worship the King of Heaven,
Who can damn you and save you.'
The prefect felt nothing but anger:
He had Margaret stripped
And raised on to the wooden horse;
Then he had firebrands lit all around.
The wooden horse was an instrument of torture
On which one sat astride.*
When the virgin was seated on the horse
And saw the burning fire, she said:
'Lord God, purify my soul,
So that no wickedness remains in it'.
Olybrius then said to her:
'You must die shortly.
But why are you going to let yourself die
When you can save yourself from death?
Do what I want and I shall release you.'
Margaret said: 'I shall not do so'.
Then he had fire brought
And firebrands lit all around;
The fire was set on all sides.
But the Holy Ghost through his power
Extinguished the fire and the heat
So that the virgin felt no pain.

Dunc la refist Olibrïus
Del cheval fust descendre jus
E piez e mains li fist lïer,
Le chief li fist avant plungier
En une cuve d'eve pleine;
E Marguerite a quelque peine
Vers le ciel amunt regarda,
A Damnedéu se cumanda:
'Deus, qui partut as ta puissance,
Veirs salviere, veire esperance,
Veire pitiez de pecheürs,
Veirs Deus, veirs Sire, veirs socurs,
Veirs jugiere, veire justise
A cui tute rien deit servise,
Espant, Deus, ta beneïçun
Sur ceste eve par tun saint num,
E pur icest batisement
De pechié aie espurgement.
Fai Saint Esprit del Ciel descendre
E mei de cest peril defendre;
Ron les lïens u je sui mise
Anceis que mort m'ait trop suzprise.'
N'aveit gaires plus dit que tant,
Ez vus uns tuneire mult grant,
Une columbe del ciel vint,
Corune d'or en sun bec tint.
Sur la virgene dreit s'asist;
Aprés parla e si li dist:
'Marguerite, esta fermement,
La Cumpaigne del Ciel t'atent'.
Ez vus les lïens depeciez
Dunt mains e piez aveit lïez;
De l'eve Marguerite issi,
A Damedeu graces rendi.
Pur les miracles qu'adunc virent
Plus de .v. mil se cunvertirent;
Senz les femes, senz les enfanz,
.v. mil humes i ot creanz.
Olibrïus curuciez fu
Que tant en vit creire en Jhesu;
Par sun maltalent e par s'ire
Les cumanda metre a martire.
En Armene les fist mener,*
Le champ n'oï unques numer.
Iluec furent tut en un jur

Then Olybrius had her come down
Off the wooden horse
And had her hands and feet bound;
He had her head plunged
Into a vat filled with water.
Margaret, with some difficulty,
Looked up towards heaven
And entrusted herself to God:
'O God, you whose power is everywhere,
True saviour, true hope,
True compassion for sinners,
True God, true Lord, true succour,
True judge, true justice,
To whom all things owe service,
Spread your blessing, O God,
Over this water in your holy name,
And through this baptism
Let me be purged of sin.
Make the Holy Ghost come down from heaven
And protect me from this danger;
Break the bonds in which I am placed
Before death has taken too tight a hold on me.'
She had scarcely finished uttering these words
When, lo, there was a huge clap of thunder;
A dove came down from heaven,
Holding a crown of gold in its beak.
It alighted directly on the virgin;
Then it spoke, saying to her:
'Margaret, stand firm;
The company of heaven awaits you'.
Lo, the bonds were broken into pieces
With which her hands and feet were bound.
Margaret emerged from the water
And gave thanks to the Lord God.
Because of the miracles they saw at that time
More than five thousand were converted;
Not counting the women and children;
Five thousand men became believers there.
Olybrius was furious
To see so many people believing in Jesus.
Out of spite and anger
He ordered them to be slaughtered.
He had them taken to Armenia;*
I never heard the name of the field.
There in a single day they were

Decolé pur la Deu amur.
Mult orent bun baptisement.
Del sanc dunt il erent sanglant
Lur fu ensi cume baptesme
En leu de oillë e del cresme.
Quant pur turment ne pur manace
Que li pruvoz e sa gent face
Ne pot la virge surmunter
Ne de sa lei faire turner,
Cumanda que fust fors menee
De la cité e decolee.
Aprestez fu qui la mena
Des que li pruvoz cumanda.
Quant fu menee a cel martire
U Malcus la deveit ocire:*
'Virge', fait il, 'le col estent,
Receif le glaive qui t'atent.
Si t'ocirai, ce peise mei.
Pur amur Deu, prie pur mei,
Prie, dame, tun creatur
Qu'ait merci de cest pecheür,
Car je vei Deu ensemble o tei.
Damë, aies merci de mei!
Estent le col, baisse le chief,
Si t'ocirai, ce m'est mult grief.'
Ele respont: 'Je te requier,
Lai mei dunt primes Deu preier,
Livrerai li mun cors e tei'.
Malcus dist: 'Dame, je l'otrei'.
Dunc se mist en aflictïun
Si fist a Deu ceste oreisun:
'Deus, qui le munt as estoré
E par tut as ta pöesté,
Qui de tut le munt garde prens
E veis defors e veis dedenz,
A tei, bels Sire, graces rent,
Qui m'as livree de turment,
De mal e de grant felunie,
De luxure e de mal envie,
Que virge sui e monde e pure,
Mult sui nete de tute ordure.
Otreie mei ce bunement
Que je te requier humlement;
Si veirement cum je te crei,
Si me fai, Sire, cest otrei:

Beheaded for the love of God.
They had a very fine baptism;
The blood in which they were covered
Acted as a form of baptism for them,
Instead of oil and cream.
When, in spite of the torture and threats
That the prefect and his men used,
He could not overcome the virgin,
Nor turn her turn from her faith,
He ordered her to be taken outside
The city and beheaded.
The man who led her away was ready
As soon as the prefect gave the order.
When she was led to this place of martyrdom,
To the place where Malcus was to kill her,*
'Virgin', he said, 'stretch forth your neck.
Receive the blade that awaits you
And I'll kill you, although it distresses me.
For the love of God, pray for me,
Pray, my lady, to your Creator
That he may take pity on this sinner,
For I can see God together with you.
My lady, have mercy on me!
Stretch forth your neck, lower your head
And I'll kill you, although it grieves me deeply.'
She replied: 'I beg you,
Let me then first pray to God;
I shall hand over to him my body and yourself'.
Malcus said: 'My lady, I grant it'.
Then she prostrated herself
And said this prayer to God:
'O God, you who created the world
And have power everywhere,
You who take care of everyone
And see both the outside and the inside,
To you, fair Lord, I give thanks,
Who have freed me from suffering,
From evil and from great wickedness,
From the sins of the flesh and from concupiscence.
I who am a virgin both pure and unsullied;
I am totally free of all filth.
Grant me with good will
What I am humbly asking of you,
As truly as I believe in you,
And grant me this, O Lord.

Qui ma vie o bon cuer lira
U de bun cuer l'escultera,
U qui de sa gaagnerie
A m'eglise fera aïe,
U qui chapele u qui mustier
A mei fera edefïer,
U del sien i metra lumiere,
Oies, sire Deus, lur priere.
Fai lur ce qu'il te prïerunt
E pur salvement te querunt;
Pardun aient de lur pechiez,
Que ne seient a mort jugiez.
Ne seit ja nez en lur maisun
Enfes se a dreit terme nun;
Li enfes sains e entiers seit
Naturalment si cum est deit.
Se feme est en travail d'enfant
E par besuing m'alt reclamant,
Bels sire Deus, lor fai aïe
E l'un e l'altre met a vie.
Qui en jugement mis sera
E de mun num li membrera,
Par mun num li fai ensement
Que n'ait mal pur fals jugement.
Qui pur m'amur te prïerunt
E de pechié pardun querrunt,
En num de mei lur fai pardun
E venir a confessïun.
A tut cels qui m'enorerunt
Et en memoire me tendrunt,
Li Sainz Espriz del Ciel descende
E d'Aversaire les defende.'
Encore esteit en oreisuns
La sainte virge a genuilluns,
Quant uns tuneires merveillus
Fu oïz, mult espöentus.
Tuit cil que le tuneire oïrent
A terre de paür chaïrent.
Devers le ciel vint une croiz,
Une columbe a une voiz;
La columbe sur li s'asist
Et endementres li a dit:
'Marguerite beneüree,
Ancele Deu et espusee,
Deservi as la sue gloire,

Those who read my Life with open heart,
Or listen to it with open heart,
Or who from their earnings
Provide help for my church,
Or have either a chapel or a church
Built in my name,
Or pay for a light to be placed within it,
Hear, O Lord God, their prayer.
Do for them what they will ask of you
And they will seek their salvation from you;
May they receive pardon for their sins
And not be condemned to death.
May there never be born in their household
Any child, unless it is at full term.
Let the child be hale and hearty,
Naturally, as it should be.
If a woman is in labour,
And calls upon me in her hour of need,
Fair Lord God, give them help
And preserve both their lives.
Those who are brought to judgement
And remember my name
Do likewise for them in my name,
So that they do not suffer through false judgement.
Those who pray to you for love of me
And seek pardon for their sins,
Let them be pardoned in my name
And come to confession.
For all those who honour me
And retain me in their memory,
May the Holy Ghost descend from heaven
And protect them from the Adversary.'
The holy virgin was still
At prayer on her knees,
When a terrible clap of thunder,
Very frightening, was heard.
All those who heard the thunder
Fell to the ground in fear.
From the direction of heaven there came a cross
And a dove with one voice.
The dove alighted on her
And said to her at once:
'Blessed Margaret,
Handmaiden and spouse of God,
You have merited his glory,

Que par trestut as fait memoire.
Deus a oï et otreié
Tut ce que tu li as prïé
E cë e plus que n'as requis.
Des or t'en vien en Paradis,
Si recevras tun gueredun
De ceste tue passïun.
El Ciel seras beneüree
O les virgenes corunee.
Tuit cil qui mais te prïerunt
De lur pechiez pardun avrunt.
Tuit cil, Marguerite, unt seü,
Que qui crerent el rei Jhesu,
Decolé furent ainz de tei
Pur ce qu'il crurent tuit en mei
Par tei e par ta pöesté;
Sachez qu'il sunt trestuit salvé.'*
La virge vint en sun seant
Si se turna vers le serjant:
'Frere', dist ele, 'des or fier'.
'Dame', dist il, 'ne t'os tuchier.
Dame, cument ferir te dei
Quant Deus del Ciel parole a tei?
Mais pur mei prie tun seignur
Que pardun aie pur t'amur.'
'Se tu', dist ele, 'ne m'ocis,
Ja n'entreras en Paradis.
Mais fai ce qui t'est cumandé,
O mei iras el regne Dé.'
Quant ce oï, si la feri,
A un colp le chief li toli.
Puis dist quant il li ot tranchié:
'Pardone mei icest pechié'.
Quant il ot ce dit, jus chaï,
Les la virge l'arme rendi.
Del Ciel vindrent angle chantant,
Entur la virge Deu loant;
Chanterent tuit: 'Sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus sabaot Deus'.
Li malade qui la tucherent
E sain e salf s'en repairerent.
Une columbe apertement
Issi del cors veant la gent,
Qui el ciel s'en ala la sus.
E le cors prist Theodimus,

For you remembered him throughout everything.
God has heard and granted
Everything you have asked of him,
Both this and more than you have sought.
At this moment, come to paradise
And you will receive your reward
For this suffering of yours;
In heaven you will be blessed
And crowned with the virgins.
All those who ever pray to you
Will have pardon for their sins.
All those who believed in Jesus the King
Knew it, Margaret,
And were beheaded before you;
Because they all believed in me,
They were saved, know this,
Through you and your power.'*
The virgin sat up once more
And turned towards the sergeant:
'Brother', she said, 'strike now'.
'My lady', he said, 'I dare not touch you.
My lady, how should I strike you
When God in heaven speaks to you?
But pray to your Lord for me
That I be pardoned for love of you.'
'If you do not kill me', she said,
'You will never enter paradise.
But do what has been commanded of you
And with me you will enter the kingdom of God.'
When he heard this, he struck her
And with one blow removed her head.
Then he said, when he had cut it off:
'Pardon me this sin'.
When he had said this, he fell down
And gave up his soul beside the virgin.
From heaven came angels singing,
Praising God around the virgin.
They all sang: '*Sanctus, sanctus,*
Dominus sabaot Deus'.*
The sick who touched her
Returned home safe and well.
A dove clearly
Emerged from her body in sight of everyone
And went up to heaven.*
Theodimus took the body*

En Antioche l'enterra
En un sarqueu que il truva.
Cel Theodimus que je di
Marguerite vit et oï;
En la chartre la visita
E pain et eve li porta.
Les oreisuns qu'ele diseit
E les peines qu'ele sofreit
Il meïsmes mist en escrit,
Ce que de li oï e vit.
Or prïum Deu qui est e fu
E a sur tute rien vertu,
Pur l'amur sainte Marguerite,
Dunt nus avum la vie dite.
Dames la devent mult amer
E pur li Damnedé loer.
De noz pechiez pardun nus face.
Ci falt sa vië, ce dit Wace,
Qui de latin en romanz mist
Ce que Theodimus escrist.
Dites amen, seignur barun,
Que Deus doint sa beneïsun
E nus doint faire cel servise
Que nus seiens salf au juïse. AMEN

And buried it in Antioch,
In a tomb he found there.
This Theodimus I am referring to
Saw and heard Margaret;
He visited her in prison
And brought her bread and water.
The prayers she uttered
And the suffering she underwent
He himself put into writing,
Everything he had heard and seen of her.
Now let us pray to God who is and was
And has power over everything,
For love of Saint Margaret,
Whose Life we have related.
Ladies should love her greatly*
And praise the Lord God for her.
May he grant us pardon for our sins.
Here ends her Life, this says Wace,
Who translated from Latin into French*
What Theodimus wrote.
Say Amen, lord barons,*
So that God will grant his blessing
And allow us to perform this service
So that we shall be safe on Judgement Day. AMEN

NOTES

These notes relate to the interpretation of Wace's text as we have printed it. For information concerning Keller's reconstruction of the text, see 'Notes to Keller's Text' below. All references to Keller in these notes are to his Wace, La Vie de sainte Marguerite.

1. For a detailed list of the differences between the putative Latin sources and Wace's *Margaret*, see Francis, ed., pp. 57–62.

2. For *virge* / *virgene*, frequently used in this text, we have adopted the translation 'virgin', but in Old French the term also has the more general meaning 'maiden'.

13–15. In citing the saint's beauty and manner of living, Wace offers a very down-to-earth explanation of the significance of Margaret's name (Latin *margarita* means 'pearl'). He may, however, also be alluding to commonplaces regarding the Christian symbolism of the pearl, which other accounts of Margaret's Life (e.g. the *Legenda aurea*) will exploit more directly. The earliest French translation of Marbode of Rennes's lapidary, dating from before 1150, includes a note, possibly from another source, to the effect that pearls are effective against diseases in general, but particularly those of the heart and eye (Paul Studer and Joan Evans, 'First French Version', vv. 873–75; see the note on p. 317). Jean-Pierre Albert offers a detailed application of the *Physiologus*'s pearl symbolism to Margaret's life, focusing on the trials she must undergo in order to appear finally as a true, Christ-like pearl ('Mythe', pp. 22–24). The term *marguerite* (*margerie*) is attested in Old French, but it is less common than *perle*. The association of saints and precious gems is not unique to Margaret's Life (see, for example, *Alexis*, vv. 378, 577; *Eufrosine*, vv. 445–53).

22. Tammi notes that the various Greek, Latin and vernacular versions of the *passio* offer different forms of Margaret's father's name, including 'Theodosius', 'Theodorus' and 'Aedesius'. Since the form is unstable and the names common, the name does not help us to determine the historical setting of the story (Tammi, pp. 13–15). Theodosius, the Latin form of the Greek Theodosios, means 'gift of God' and was the name of two Christian Roman Emperors of the East who reigned within the century following Margaret's life. Ironically, Theodosius I (ca. 346–395) was

a fierce opponent of paganism who dispatched a prefect to the eastern Mediterranean, including Asia Minor, to demolish temples (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, 'Theodosius I'). Another Theodosius, Bishop of Auxerre (d. ca. 512), was canonised and shares one of Margaret's feast days (July 17; Dom Jules Baudot, p. 613).

23. For the term *mahomerie* the *Old French–English Dictionary* gives 'mosque, Mohammedan temple, pagan temple in general, Islam (faith and country), idol, statue, image'. The meaning 'pagan temple' seems appropriate in this case. But when Wace uses the term again in the *Nicholas* ('Le pople ostat de la folie / Et de cele mahomerie', vv. 363–64), the meaning is correctly identified by Ronsjö as 'idolatry' (ed., p. 201).

85. Olybrius was the name of perhaps as many as ten prominent Romans of the Late Empire, all of whom appear to have lived half a century or more after Margaret's supposed death date (J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, I, pp. 639–42, II, pp. 794–98). One model for Margaret's Olybrius may be Quintus Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius (Praefectus Praetorio Orientis, 378). According to Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, this Olybrius was a Christian and 'an unscrupulous land-grabber, working through others from behind the scenes to oppress the weak [. . .] and pervert the course of justice, to his own aggrandisement'. In contrast, Ammianus Marcellinus portrays this Olybrius as 'mild and fair, severely punishing false accusations [. . .] and consistently just and humane; his only faults were that, in private life, he was over-fond of luxury, the theatre and love-affairs' (Jill Harries, p. 116). The name became a common noun in French by the sixteenth century, meaning either a braggart or a tyrant (*Trésor de la langue française*, 'olibrius'). See Notes to Keller's Text below.

88. Antioch here is either Antioch in Pisidia or Antioch on the Orontes. See Introduction, pp. 163–64, and Notes to Keller's Text below.

109. For the wording of this line, see Ps 56:2 (NRSV 57:1): 'Miserere me'. See also Clayton and Magennis's edition of the Latin Passion (*BHL* 5303) for extensive notes on the biblical citations of that work, many of which Wace retains (*The Old English Lives of St. Margaret*, pp. 220–23).

126. The accusation that the Jews were not only responsible for Jesus's death (Matt. 27:24–25) but killed him themselves derives from I Thessalonians 2:15, which makes reference to 'the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and the prophets'. See Jeremy Cohen, *Christ Killers*, esp. pp. 55–92, for the history of this myth in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. In Francis's

edition of Margaret's *passio*, when Olybrius confronts the saint, asking 'Thus you invoke the name of Christ, whom the Jews crucified?', Margaret retorts, 'Your ancestors crucified him and therefore they died' (Francis, ed., p. 10; our thanks to Blanche Conger for her advice on the translation). The topos is common in Old French literature. In Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine*, for example, the pagan philosophers give voice to it, while Catherine does not (vv. 745–50), but in Guillaume de Berneville's *Life of St Giles* Giles himself includes it in a lengthy *credo* (v. 186).

138. See note to v. 126.

182. For '*In saecula saeculorum*' ('for ever and ever' / 'world without end'), see also v. 362. Lines 181–82 follow the *BHL* 5303 *passio*, which contains the phrase 'in saecula saeculorum'. Wace had no need to translate these words, since his audience would have known them from the Mass and the Divine Office (e.g. the Gloria: 'Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in saecula saeculorum' / 'Glory to God and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning and now and always, and for ever and ever').

189–92. Marta Powell Harley studies three parallels between Wace's torture scenes in his *Margaret* and Chrétien de Troyes's treatment of Fenice in *Cligés*: (i) the number of lines committed to torture, (ii) the authors' choice of words to discuss the torture, (iii) the response of the crowds of witnesses. See also vv. 252, 255–56.

224–28. The theme of insensate gods or idols, drawing on Ps. 113 (NRSV 115), appears in a number of Old French Lives (e.g. Life of St *Catherine*, vv. 1319–56; *Life of St Lawrence*, vv. 433–41). Elaine M. Treharne, in her study of an Old English Life of Margaret, argues that the work shows all of the evil characters to resemble the idols in their insensibility and passivity, while the good characters perceive and act (' "They Should Not Worship Devils" ', *passim*). This opposition holds true for Wace's version. Olybrius, for example, speaks but does not act, and he covers his eyes (v. 257) so as not to see Margaret's tortured body. In contrast, Malcus is able to see God with Margaret (v. 607) and to hear and actively respond to the saint's words.

236. This line might appear surprising, since Olybrius's next action shows his continuing aggression against Margaret rather than any apparent change; indeed, he proceeds to order a repetition of the torture that immediately preceded the discussion. However, Wace here underlines

the provost's inconstancy, in opposition to Margaret's firmness. Olybrius alternates between cajoling and torturing the saint, while Margaret constantly affirms her faith in God and her rejection of the provost.

288. The motif of the saint as alone in the world, often the only child of deceased parents, is common. In addition to Wace's *Nicholas*, see, for example, the twelfth-century French Lives of Catherine of Alexandria, Giles and Mary the Egyptian; Alexis and Eufrosine have no siblings.

296. Keller (p. 104) notes the strangeness of this line. The expression 'aler ensemble', usually denotes accompaniment, but Keller interprets it here as 'struggle with' ('tenir tête à'). The line could perhaps be a corruption of 'Qu'ensemble lui *ne* puisse aler'.

307–40. See Introduction, pp. 169–70, for a discussion of the description of the dragon and of Margaret's victory over it.

325. Cf. Ps. 103:9 (NRSV 104:9), in reference to the end of the Flood.

362. See note to v. 182.

369. Rufon (MS M Rufum, v. 369; MSS AT Rufin, v. 420). Francis notes that one 'Ruffini' carries someone's soul off to Hell in *La Bataille de Mansourah*. and she hypothesises that the name might be related to the word 'ruffian' (Francis, ed., pp. 64–65). With reference to Margaret's Greek Passion (*BHG* 1165) Boulhol remarks that the name Rufus means 'the red' and is therefore very appropriate for a fire-breathing demon (p. 268).

371–72. For a discussion, see Introduction, 'Themes' (p. 168).

380. The theme of the demon being forced to confess to his saintly conqueror is a fairly common one in hagiography and may originate in the *Acts of Thomas* (Boulhol, pp. 275–89).

389. On the divine vision in prison, see Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine*, in which the saint, while imprisoned between tortures, receives visits from a dove, angels and even God (vv. 1601–4, 1841–62). The first of Catherine's visions is similarly accompanied by a bright light.

413. Belsabut (A: Belgibus; T: Beelzeb). Mark 3:22 seems to identify Beelzebub as the prince of demons. In the manuscripts of the *BHL* 5303 *passio* that Francis and Clayton and Magennis edit, the demon does not give his name. He refers to Beelzebub as his predecessor (Francis, ed., p. 31; Clayton and Magennis, p. 206).

453–54. MSS AMT have different readings for these lines. Keller's reading is taken from from T, since he finds the readings of AM surprising and unlikely (p. 108). A has 'Merveilles voi de tel mescine / Sa valor passe medicine' ('I am amazed by such a maiden, whose worth surpasses medicine') and M has 'Merveile mei d'une meschine / Qui est povre et orphenine' ('I am amazed by a girl who is poor and orphaned').

480. Lucifer (MT; A: Lucabel). In the manuscripts of the Latin texts that Francis and Clayton and Magennis edit, the demon names Satan without mentioning his earlier name (Francis, ed., p. 36; Clayton and Magennis, p. 208). See Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, pp. 107–18, for the origins of the myth of the fall of the angels. In the Bible, the name 'Lucifer' does not refer to a demon; St Jerome uses this name for Satan before his fall (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, 'Lucifer').

482. The Greek and Latin Passions cite the Book of Jannes and Jambres (or Jamnes and Mambres), an apocryphal text condemned by the *Decretum Gelasianum* (Boulhol, p. 287). Keller (p. 45) suggests that Wace's omission of the names of the books—just like his suppression of the name of the field in Armenia (v. 583)—comes from his unwillingness to present information he has not verified (Keller, p. 45). It is also possible that the copy or copies of the Passion from which he worked simply did not include the specific reference. Given the apotropaic nature of Margaret's Life, Wace may have hesitated to include the names of Jamnes and Mambres, which might be used as satanic talismans. It may be coincidental, but Wace explicitly refuses to include Merlin's prophesies in his *Brut* (vv. 7535–42; see Jean Blacker, ' "Ne vuil sun livre' ", for a discussion of the political reasons that may have led to this decision).

490. Babiloine (MA; T: Babiloinne). Cf. Francis, ed., p. 60, who notes that the reference situates the event in the context of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (586 BC). Marie-Geneviève Grossel remarks that by making Nebuchadnezzar's army responsible for breaking the vessel, Wace places the legendary event within historical chronology (p. 205). However, Wace may have found this detail in his source, since it echoes Chapter 15 of the *Testament of Solomon*: see the following note.

496. Boulhol sees in this story of the imprisoned demons a conflation of a Judaic legend from the *Testament of Solomon* (first to fifth century AD) and the Greek myth of Pandora (pp. 284–86). The Greek *Testament of Solomon* recounts Solomon's summoning, interrogation and enslavement of numerous demons who are responsible for all of the ills in the

world. Particularly relevant are Chapter 13, in which Solomon learns that Obyzouth, who kills newborns, can be 'thwarted [. . .] by writing her name on a piece of papyrus when women give birth', and the king hangs her by her hair; Chapter 15, in which Enepsigos 'prophesies the destruction of kingdom, Temple, and Jerusalem, the scattering of the demons, and the coming of the Son of God'; Chapter 16, in which 'Kunopegos is sealed in a bowl and stored away in the Temple'; and Chapter 25, in which 'Solomon interrogates the demon from the Red Sea, [. . .] the one whom Iannes and Iambres called to their aid against Moses in Egypt' (*Testament of Solomon*, p. 936).

502. Mark 8:33.

521–24. Keller (p. 46) reports that the Latin Passions he consulted merely say that Margaret was suspended in the air and tortured with 'lampadas ardentes' ('flaming torches'), so Wace may have introduced the 'cheval fust' (v. 521) as a logical explanation of how she was suspended. However, as Keller notes elsewhere (p. 9), Hrabanus Maurus's *Martyrologium* mentions the 'eculeum' (or 'equuleum'), which means 'little horse' as well as 'rack'. The detail that the rack was made of wood appears to be Wace's inspiration. The Lives of St Catherine (by Clemence of Barking, vv. 2061–72) and St Lawrence (vv. 666–73) explain significant torture implements in a similarly dry and informative tone (Françoise Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, p. 382).

583. Armene (T only). The Latin Passion, in the manuscripts edited by Francis and by Clayton and Magennis, refers to 'campo Lymet in Armoenia cyvitate' ('Lymet field in the city of Armenia', Francis, ed., p. 45). Given that AT both preserve Wace's denial that he knew the field's name, the poet may not have trusted his source (see the note to v. 482 above), but it seems likely that the source did provide a name. Keller (p. 117) defines 'Armene' as 'Arménie, région montagneuse de l'Asie occidentale, partagée aujourd'hui entre la Turquie, l'Iran et la Russie' ('Armenia, the mountainous region of western Asia today shared by Turkey, Iran and Russia'), but in the Middle Ages the Armenians occupied more southern regions than this suggests. Of particular note is the fact that the Armenian population of Cilicia, just north of Antioch on the Orontes, grew significantly over the tenth and eleventh centuries and became an Armenian principality (Robert L. Wolff and Harry W. Hazard, p. 632). In this geographic context, Olybrius's order to have the converts martyred in Armenia would probably not have appeared strange to a twelfth-century audience.

600. Malcus (MA; T: Marcus). The name occurs in many, if not most, versions of Margaret's Life. In the Gospel of John (18:10), Malchus is the high priest's servant or slave whose ear Peter cuts off when the group of soldiers and servants come to arrest Jesus; in Luke 22:51, Jesus heals the ear (our thanks to Vina Nguyen for this reference). The author of the *passio* may have been inspired by Jerome's St Malchus of Marona, a city thirty miles from Antioch in Syria. According to Jerome, the name means 'king', and St Malchus's story is in essence 'a story of chastity for the chaste' (pp. 186, 210). Having fled his parents' demands that he marry and inherit their wealth, Malchus became a monk, but he was eventually forced to marry after having been abducted by Saracens. Nonetheless, he and his wife maintained their chastity and Malchus eventually delivered his wife into the care of a monastery of women (pp. 184–210).

687–92. These lines, which appear only in M, are awkward to translate. Vv. 688 and 690 lack a syllable and the entire passage seems to be corrupt. As Keller (p. 114) indicates, 'qui' in v. 688 needs to be interpreted as 'those who'. Keller places a semi-colon after v. 691, but it may be preferable to follow Francis (ed., p. 52) and place a comma here. To facilitate the flow of the translation, we have translated v. 692 before v. 691.

713–14. Based on Isaiah 6:3, the words 'Sanctus, sanctus, / Dominus sabaot Deus' ('Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts') would be very familiar to Wace's audience from, among other prayers, the opening of the Sanctus, which became part of the liturgy within the century after Christ's death, and the 'Te Deum', part of the Divine Office which is recited at the end of Matins (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, 'Sanctus' and 'Te Deum').

717–19. As in the earliest French saint's Life, the *Sequence of St Eulalia*, the poet avoids any direct references to the saint's death, focusing instead on the action of the executioner and the saint's ascension to heaven in the form of a dove (vv. 22, 25). The Margaret *passio* that Francis edits (from MS Bodleian Library, Canon. misc. 230) makes no mention of this dove: instead, angels carry the saint's soul to heaven (p. 54). In Clayton and Magennis's edition, based on Paris, BNF, lat. 5574, the angels carry Margaret's body 'above the clouds' (pp. 216–17).

720. Tammi notes that the author's name Theodimus (*passio*: Theotimus), which is found in the majority of Latin versions of the *passio*, means 'devotee of God' or 'who honours God' and is thus an appropriate designation for a writer who wishes to honour God by recording the acts of the saint (pp. 14–15).

735. Wace identifies his audience as including women much more explicitly than do the apparent sources. As Laurent remarks, this emphasis suggests that he was writing for a lay audience, since nuns would presumably not require the aid of a saint who helps in childbirth (*Plaire et édifier*, p. 63).

739. On the term *romanz*, see the note to the *Nicholas*, v. 37.

741. Although the apostrophe, 'signor baron', seems to identify the rank and sex of the audience, it more likely evokes a general audience who would have heard the Life read aloud. As Pierre Gallais has commented, ' "Signor" ne s'adresse pas nécessairement à un public noble car, d'un côté, quel public est plus noble que celui de Chrétien [de Troyes], qui ne l'emploie jamais, et, de l'autre part, quel public est moins noble que celui de Gautier le Leu et même de Jean Bodel, qui l'emploient assez fréquemment?' (Gallais, pp. 333–34, cited in Laurent, p. 57) (' "Signor" is not necessarily addressed to a noble audience for, on the one hand, what audience is more noble than that of Chrétien [de Troyes], who never uses it and, on the other, what audience is less noble than that of Gautier le Leu and even of Jean Bodel, who use it quite frequently').

NOTES TO KELLER'S TEXT

As Ashford's edition of the Conception Nostre Dame *and Ronsjö's edition of the* Life of St Nicholas *include variant readings at the bottom of each page of text, these variants are not reproduced in the present volume. However, as there is no accompanying list of variants for Keller's reconstruction of the* Life of St Margaret, *the present notes provide information concerning the various stages of this reconstruction together with an indication of the principal variants.*

1. From v. 1 to v. 221 the base manuscript is A (Arsenal). The beginning of M (Tours) is water-damaged as well as mutilated and this copy lacks vv. 1–252 and 291–362. When Keller adopts readings from T (Troyes), the reading of A is provided in these notes. Where he offers a correction of his own (K), both A and T are cited in the notes.
18. A: Sa casteé se li voua.
24. K; A: ordres, T: ydres.
36. A: l'onora.
38. K; A regularly offers the form Margerite (Margerie in vv. 509, 573), T Merguerite and M Marguerite. T: Bone pucelle; A: [Jo]evene pucele.
53. A: Ains se fu prise a autre vie.
57. A: Mais n'en pot.
67. A: que nos vos lisons.
69. A: de par le pais.
72. A: A qui lor cuers.
80. A: en casteé.
81. A: En chanp.
82. A: Quant sa norice conmandoit.
83. A: Ot.
85. T regularly offers the form Olibrius, A Olimbrius and M Olinbrius.
88. M and T regularly offer the form Antioche (Anthioche in T v. 20), and A Anthioce (Antioche in v. 20). A: n'avoit droit.
92. A: des.
94. A: pernoit.
96. A: et de somiers.
103. K; A: En soy ostage; T: A sangnantie.
105–07. A: Quant cil la damoise pristrent / Et li mosterent et li distrent / El conmença fort a crier.
109. A: Aies merci sire de moi.
118. A: Ne casteé.
130. A: Diva de quel gent es tu nee.
132–33. A: Sont d'Anthioce mi parent / Diva conment as tu a non.
138. A: la loi des Juiz.
144. A: nul sers.
145. A: Mais il l'estuet.
146. A: d'Enfer garir.
150. A: vois a volenté.
152. A: a en a sa devise.
154. A: A moi diras.
156. A: forment pener.
157. A: En torment.
159. A: Le tien Dé.

162. A: Et en mon lit te metrai.
170. A: Ne m'en tenra por.
173. A: prant.
181. A: Beneoit soit sire ton nom.
184. A: Tol moi des mains al anemi.
187. A: foisoit.
195. A: Se tu en moi croire voloies.
205–06. A: Li provos l'a tornee ariere / Mult se paine de li ocire.
208. A: estre ot li saine.
211. K; A: Tant savries; T: Que.
214. K; A: Deu ne face; T: Que nuns de vos paor me face.
219. A: devries croire.
220. A: Car sa creance est tote voire.
222. A: met ens.
223. A: Felons estes ne vos agree.
224. A: Ne ja vos dex n'ara duree.
225–26. T; two half lines survive in A.
227–48. T; missing in A: bottom corner of folio torn (Francis, ed., p. 64).
250. A: De mal.
252. A: char batoient.
253–90. M is the now base manuscript. When Keller adopts a reading from another manuscript or offers his own correction, the source is indicated in these notes as A (Arsenal), T (Troyes) or K (Keller) and the reading from M (Tours) is provided.
253. T (see v. 85); M: Olinbrius.
259. AT; M: Lors vint li rois.
260. T; M: Por quei ne m'aime ce que doit.
266, 268. A; missing in M and T. See Keller, pp. 29–30.
269. AT; M: faiseit ton talent.
270. K; M: en ireit en fuec ardent, A: en Enfer o toi iroit, T: o la toie Anfer auroit.
273. T; M damaged.
274–76. T; M: Batra sa char espessement / Que l'entreille que iert el cors / Par les plaies perent dehors.
279. T; M: Puis en fu en.
281. T; M: Donc fist signum crucis sor sei.
283. T; M: Don.
286. T; M: Oing mes plaies.
290. T; M: tu sire ne me guerpir mie.
291–96. T; missing in M.
297–362. Two folios missing in M, beginning v. 291 (Francis, ed., p. 63). The base manuscript is A. When Keller adopts readings from T (Troyes), the reading of A is provided in the notes. Where Keller offers a correction of his own (K), both A and T are cited in the notes.
300. For 'vin' T has 'eue'.
301. A: Donoit li.
309. A: de son nes.
310–12. A: Fu noir entor son col avoit / Barbe avoit d'or de fers les dens.
313. The texts in the present volume are printed according to the editions used. However, we make an exception in this line and in that of v. 349. Keller changes 'Puor' (AT) to 'Païr', but the *passio* considered to be Wace's source describes a stench here, rather than fear. We restore 'Puor'.
321. A: pues garder.
325. A: Qui a la mer.
337. A: qu'ele ot fait.

349. Keller changes 'sa puor' (A) to 'ma paür'. The change is unwarranted since the copyist makes a clear distinction between 'paor' (v. 317) and 'puor' (v. 313), and the *passio* reads 'video fetorem eius a me cessare . . . video putredinem eius recedentem a me' (Francis, ed., p. 26, ll. 259 and 261). We restore 'sa puor'. T lacks this couplet. See the note to v. 313.
352. A: odors jetant.
358. A: A qui tos ont rafement.
363–end. The base manuscript is M. When Keller adopts a reading from another manuscript or offers his own correction, the source is indicated in the notes as A (Arsenal), T (Troyes) or K (Keller), and the reading from M (Tours) is provided.
368. T; M: Manable en.
371–72. AT; M: Vint sa a tei qui te sorprist (372 is missing).
376. K; M: Que ne m'ocis ensement; A: Que ne me faces ensement; T: Que tu me faces ausiment.
377. AT; M Donc la virgene as cheviaus pris (follows v. 374).
378–79. AT; M: Encontre terre l'a jus plaissé (combines two lines into one).
382. A; M: entrement.
385–88. M transposes these two couplets.
385. A; M: N'en avoit pas encor tot dit.
386. AT; M: resusir.
391. A; M: virgene. M consistently uses this spelling (vv. 601, 625, 664, 710, 712 and as indicated below).
392. AT; M: que.
394. T; M: cist que.
396. A; M: As donee.
399. AT; M; il t'atent.
407. AT; M: dame ce que vodras.
409. T; M: alascher.
411. A; M: La virgene cel que il prea.
412. AT; M: alascha.
414. AT; M: sai, nom.
417. AT; M: Que mais.
424. K; M: E des que.
426. K; M: Gloire eus el ciel deservie; A: Glorie del ciel as deservie; T: As ou ciel gloire deservie.
427. AT; M: bele et gente.
428. A; M: A Damnedé, ta entente.
429. A; M: Signum crucis.
433. T; M: Lur oilz et lur.
445. AT; M: enfermes.
449. AT; M: Hai lais.
450. AT; M: Quant une virgene.
453. T; M: Merveile mei d'une meschine.
454. T; M: Qui tant est povre et orphenine. M's reading is probably more accurate than T's. There is no mention in the *passio* of Margaret's attractiveness at this point, and, *pace* Keller (p. 108), M provides a more coherent reading, since the following lines treat Margaret's family and Wace has already evoked the orphan topos (v. 289).
458. T; M: Est la virgene a Crist donee.
462. AT; M: Quant par une virgene sui vencuz.
466. AT; M: D'enchacer si l'ancele.
470. AT; M: Ne te celer encontre mei.
471. T; M: Qui est et dont li menbre sunt.
483. AT; M: plus.
487. AT; M: et si lie.

498. AT; M: N'ai mestier.
500. A, T; M: Tu ne dis.
501–02. AT; M: Quant ce ot ariere fui / Ce dit la virgene ancele sui.
505. A; M: s'entorne.
506. AT; M: Quant ni.
507. AT; M: Au tiers jor.
511. AT; M: E tien.
512. A; M: Crei le deu.
513. AT; M: E Marg.
515 A; M: que aores.
521. A; M: Puis el cheval amont lever.
524. AT; M: l'om.
525. AT; M: Quant ele el cheval s'asit.
526. AT; M: et dist.
527. AT; M: Beau sire Deus.
532. AT; M: te puez de mort.
533. AT; M: je t'amerai.
536. A; M: Entor li.
542. A, T; M: cheval descendre.
545. K; M aigue; A oile; T ague.
556. T; M: aigue.
560. A, T; M: peché.
561. T; M: Ronpez.
562. AT; M: m'ait si soprise.
563 T; M: Ne avoit, de tant.
564. AT; M: une vertu.
573. K; M: De la cuve; A: De l'oile; T: De l'aigue.
576. A; M: .v. mil et .c. en conv.; T: Plus de mil gent se conv.
583–84. T; M: Hors la vile les fist mener / Les chies a fait a toz coper; A: A martire la fait mener / Le canp n'oi onques nomer.
585–86. AT (trestuit .i.); M: Illec furent por Deu amor / Degolé trestuit en un jor.
588. A; M: le sanc, erent.
592. A; M: a ele.
593. AT; M: Ne la puet onques.
607. AT; M: Que Deus est ensem.
612. K; M: Laisse mei primes; A: Lai moi Deu primes deproier; T: La moi dont premier Deu prier.
613. AT; M: mei.
617. AT; M: qui tot le.
620. AT; M: E ses tot quanque font les genz.
621. AT; M: graces en rent.
632. A; M: E a lire la convertera.
636. A; M: Del sien.
637. A; M: O qui del sien metre.
641–44. AT; M transposes these couplets.
646. AT; M: N. si cum.
648. K; M: m'ait reclamant.
649. A; M: oie lur priere.
651. A; M: mais.
653. A; M: eisement.
656. T; M: de lor.
658. AT; M: venir i avoir c.
660. A; M: En memoire de mei ferunt.
662. AT; M: E aversaire.

670. A; M, T (columbe): Une columbo et une voiz. M consistently treats the voice as separate from the dove (see v. 672).
672. T; M, A (Endementres): E dementres que la voiz dist.
674. AT; M: et honoree.
678. AT; M: tu as.
687. K; M: E tuit.
688. K; M: Que crerent.
690. K; M: crurent en.
692. K; M: Ce sachez.
693. A; M: La virgene se sist en.
698. T; M: l'angele Deus.
699. T; M: prie por mei.
700. T; M: Que ja je pardon. Keller reads 'Que pardun aie pur t'amur', but 'Que j'aie pardon . . .' may be preferable.
702. A; M: N'iras o moi.
706. AT; M: Qu'a un coup.
707. AT; M: copé.
711. A; M: angeles.
713. A; M: Chantoient.
715. T; M: Tuit li enferme.
716. T; M: retornerent.
726. K; M: aigue.
734. Keller omits four lines from M, following v. 734, without explanation: Si voirement cum Deus l'ama / E en sa fin molt l'enora / Por li mainte miracle fist / Si cum trovons en escrist.
738. K; M: Grace.

LIFE OF ST NICHOLAS

INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts and Editions

Wace's *Life of St Nicholas* (*La Vie de saint Nicolas*) has been preserved in five manuscripts:

1. **A** Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3516, f. 69v–73v. Probably completed in 1267 or 1268 and could have been copied at Hesdin, at the court of the counts of Artois. Picard. Also contains the *Life of St Margaret* (MS A) and parts of the *Conception Nostre Dame* (MS X).
2. **B** Paris, BNF, fr. 902, f. 117v–125v. Second half of the thirteenth century. Anglo-Norman.
3. **C** Cambridge, Trinity College, B.14.39 (323), f. 48r–56v. Late thirteenth century. Anglo-Norman.
4. **D** Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 270 (*SC* 21844), f. 93v–106v. Early thirteenth century. Anglo-Norman.
5. **O** Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 86 (*SC* 1687), f. 150r–161r. Completed between 1272 and 1283. Anglo-Norman.[1]

The *Life of St Nicholas* was first published in 1834 by Louis-Jean-Nicolas Monmerqué, who based his edition on MS B (with A used to correct defective passages).[2] In 1850 Nikolaus Delius published an edition based on D (also with the use of O), and in 1924 an edition based on B was published by Mary Sinclair Crawford. Clarence Harvey Mills's University of Chicago dissertation (1928), which was the first edition to be based on all five manuscripts, remains unpublished. The standard edition, by Einar Ronsjö, appeared in 1942; based on B, it also takes account of all five manuscripts.[3] This edition is printed and translated in the present volume. In 1985 the work was edited again by Rosanna Brienza Lagala with a facing prose translation in Italian.

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[1] This manuscript is reproduced in Judith Tschann and M. B. Parkes, *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*.

[2] A second editor, named La Borderie or La Bouderie, is sometimes associated with this work. For details, see Blacker and Burgess, *Wace: A Critical Bibliography*, item 7.

[3] For further details concerning these manuscripts, see Crawford, ed., pp. 23–27, Ronsjö, ed., pp. 46–52, and Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 53–55.

The Manuscript Tradition

Although none of the manuscripts is a direct copy of any other extant manuscript, and in spite of the fact that there are considerable differences among the manuscripts within individual lines, all of the copies present nearly the same set of miracles in the same order and with few substantive lacunæ or additions.[4] Among the significant lacunæ, C lacks the majority of the prologue and epilogue, including the parts that identify the author and the patron; the scribe also suppressed the Devil's lengthy speech in Episode 17 (strangled child) and the whole of Episode 18 (tooth miracle). The tooth miracle is likewise lacking in A. The scribe of D abridges the father's lamentation in Episode 17 (strangled child) and D has also lost a folio or two containing the end of the poem (v. 1496ff.). Ronsjö considered Episode 20 (possessed man) to be original to the work, although only A and O preserve it (pp. 192–93).

These variations, together with the minor differences, allowed Ronsjö to group AOC together; O and C are probably copies of a same manuscript, now lost. B appears related to this group, while D remains largely distinct from the others. The significant divergences in the lines, however, suggest that there must have been at least four other manuscripts, if not more, from which the extant copies were made.

Ronsjö repeatedly calls attention, in less than flattering terms, to the scribes' tendency to alter the material (he refers, for example, to the 'décomposition' of the text, p. 65). The emendations within each manuscript, however, deserve further study. As Le Saux remarks, the differences among the types of manuscripts that contain the poem show that Wace's work was popular with a range of audiences, from monks to noblemen (*Companion*, p. 54). It seems reasonable to think that by means of the substantial interventions each scribe may have shaped the text for a particular audience.

Whatever the reasons behind the variations, the differences make the choice of base manuscript somewhat difficult. Nonetheless, B, which Ronsjö selected as his base, has the merit of being the least contaminated by conscious revisions (pp. 47, 64–65). O, the least altered manuscript after B, provides corrective readings for the missing and unintelligible lines of the base manuscript (p. 108).

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[4] See the table in Ronsjö, pp. 56–57.

Author, Date, Patronage

Wace announces himself twice as the author of the *Nicholas*: (i) 'Jo sui Normanz s'i ai a non Guace' (v. 35, variant D Gace); (ii) 'Ci falt le livre mestre Guace' (v. 1546). In this second occurrence, as in the *Conception Nostre Dame* and later in the *Brut* and the *Rou*, he refers to himself as 'mestre' (see General Introduction, note 6). We know that he was a *clerc lisant* in Caen and he may be referring to this office when, on three occasions, he insists that the saint's feast should be accompanied by both readings and singing (vv. 224–25, 1008–10, 1091–92; see below, pp. 262–64).

The remaining first-person interventions offer little additional information about the author. Apart from naming himself and informing his public that he is a Norman (v. 35), Wace intervenes to assert his own authority and the authenticity of his narrative. He first explains in the prologue that he is writing because he has been officially requested to produce a version of the story of St Nicholas in the French vernacular (vv. 36–37). Here, he emphasises his linguistic capabilities by insisting on the issue of the language in which the work will be composed, i.e. French ('romanz') rather than Latin. He adds immediately that he will tell of Nicholas's life and miracles in 'romanz' (vv. 39–40) and relate in 'romanz' a little of what the Latin tells us (vv. 41–42). At the close of his narrative, he repeats his point that the work is a translation from Latin into 'romanz', doing so this time in the third person (v. 1548). Throughout the narrative, using the 'ne sai' technique he employs frequently in the *Brut* and the *Rou* and more sparingly in the *Margaret* and the *Conception*, he calls attention to the limits of his knowledge of minor details (vv. 641, 644, 679, 986; see above, p. 152). Thus he claims not to know, for example, the reason behind an archbishop's wrongful exile that stops the flow of miraculous oil from Nicholas's tomb (v. 64). By showing such limits, he seeks to persuade his audience of the veracity of what he does tell them (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 28), and through his use of the first person 'sai' he reminds them of his authorial presence. He does this again in v. 1089, when he says that 'we' cannot find anyone who celebrated Nicholas's feast day before Cethron ('Devant cels ne trovum nus pas…', v. 1088ff.). In so doing, he clearly wishes to indicate that the material he has assembled for his narrative is the result of personal enquiry, thereby lending an extra level of authenticity to his version of the legend. A similar use of 'we' in the epilogue ('we do not find [all of Nicholas's miracles] written down and have not heard them all', vv. 1555–56) reinforces this idea of personal investigation, but also serves to praise the saint, whose miracles are innumerable.

Like the prologue's comment that the work was commissioned, the epilogue's reference to the patron serves primarily to reinforce the authority of Wace's project rather than to provide information about the man who requested the work. Wace offers no extended praise of the patron or account of how he came to commission the poem. The lines simply identify him by name as a certain Robert fitz Tout (or Tiout) and say that he was devoted to Nicholas (vv. 1548–49).[5] Crawford (pp. 21–22) identifies this Robert as Count of Dreux (d. 1188), the fourth son of Louis Thibault (Louis VI, The Fat) and younger brother of Louis VII (pp. 21–22). Ronsjö (pp. 193–94), however, finds this identification unconvincing and considers it likely that Wace's patron was the father of the Robert who is attested in charters dating to 1217 as making donations to the abbey of Sainte-Trinité in Caen; he is described in the charters as 'Robertus filius Roberti Theoldi'. The father, Robert Theoldi or Tioudi, would have been a contemporary of Wace. In the early thirteenth century his sons clearly belonged to one of the wealthy families of Caen. A gift given by his son Roger to the Hôtel-Dieu in Caen is mentioned in one of Innocent III's papal bulls, dated 1210.

Although Robert is clearly the source of the commission, the implied audience of the work is much larger. Wace consistently addresses the audience in the plural (e.g., 'Oëz' / 'Hear', v. 96; 'veïssez' / 'you would have seen', v. 895) and four times he apostrophises them as 'seignurs' (vv. 227, 275, 807, 1329).[6] In vv. 227–28 he addresses a restricted audience: those who sail the sea ('Seignurs, vus qui alez par mer, / De cest baron oëz parler'). We have seen that Wace had a particular passion for the sea,[7] and here we observe that some of his audience presumably shared this interest. The apostrophe introduces a miracle that would appeal to sailors, since it tells how Nicholas saved a ship from a storm (Episode 6). Wace begins the following miracle with a more general address to 'seignurs' in order to indicate a return to a topic of broader interest (v. 275).

The exact date of the *Nicholas* remains unknown, but scholars generally agree that it is the last of Wace's three hagiographical poems and was composed around 1150. Ronsjö (p. 20) dates the three poems to the period extending from when Wace was seemingly a *clerc lisant* in Caen to the

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[5] Le Saux notes that it may have been the father, Tiout, who loved Nicholas, since the verb is in the past tense (*Companion*, p. 53).

[6] As an apostrophe, 'seignurs' is entirely conventional. See note to the *Margaret*, v. 741.

[7] See General Introduction, p. 1, and the Introduction to the *Conception Nostre Dame*, p. 16 and note 10.

date of completion of the *Brut*, i.e. from before 1135 until 1155. Based on the use of certain literary devices (repetition, juxtaposition of synonyms, alliteration, direct address to the audience etc.) and the generally richer vocabulary, Ronsjö considers the style of the *Nicholas* to be closer than the *Margaret* and the *Conception* to the *Brut* and the *Rou* (see the section on Style below). He therefore accepts Crawford's date of around 1150 for the *Nicholas* (Crawford, p. 21; Ronsjö, p. 26). Using different criteria to assess the date of the *Nicholas*, Le Saux (p. 53) speculates that in the late 1140s Wace would have been fully occupied with the efforts to establish a new administrative system in Normandy. She therefore dates the *Nicholas* either to the period before 1146 or to the early 1150s.

Outline and Structure of the Story[8]

The narrative is structured around Nicholas's great miracles and good deeds ('Les granz miracles et les bens', v. 197). It can be divided into twenty-five sections, including the prologue and epilogue (see also Ronsjö, pp. 11–14, and Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 60–61). The narrative episodes take two forms: (i) short stories recounting assistance given to specified beneficiaries (indicated in the following table by the figures 1, 2 etc. in brackets); (ii) brief descriptions of Nicholas's pious life and assistance to unspecified recipients (indicated by the letters a, b, c in brackets).

M = episode found in the Mombritius version; F = episode found in the Falconius version[9]

1–44 Prologue: Wace explains that clerics have a duty to inform lay-people about saints and their feasts, just as all members of society must use the gifts they receive from God to serve God. Naming himself, Wace says he has been requested to translate St Nicholas's life and miracles from Latin into French.[10]

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[8] Because Wace's *Nicholas* is episodic in nature, any outline of the text simultaneously reveals its structure, so we combine here the outline summary and structural analysis.

[9] The Mombritius and Falconius versions of the *Vita* (Life) of St Nicholas served as Wace's principal sources. For a full discussion, see 'Sources and their Treatment' below.

[10] Gerald F. Carr ('The Prologue to Wace's *Vie de saint Nicholas*') divides lines 1–44 into (i) an Exhortation (vv. 1–34) and (ii) the conventional prologue (vv. 35–44). He suggests that Wace had a definite plan of composition for the Exhortation, based on direct repetitions and antitheses that produce a symmetrical structure.

45–80 (a) Nicholas's Early Life (Parentage and Lactation):[11] born to noble, wealthy and virtuous parents, he shows his saintliness whilst still an infant by fasting for two days each week. On his parents' death, he distributes their wealth to the poor. (MF)

81–120 (1) Gift of Three Bags of Gold (Three Daughters): on three successive nights, Nicholas anonymously throws bags of gold through a window to an impoverished man and his three daughters to relieve their poverty, to save the young women from prostitution and provide them with dowries, and to honour the Holy Trinity. When the man catches his benefactor, Nicholas tells him not to speak of his gift but to praise God. (MF)

121–56 (2) Nicholas becomes Bishop: a 'holy angel' (v. 143) resolves a dispute among an assembly of bishops about who should become the next bishop of Myra, saying that they should choose the first man who comes to the church in the morning. Nicholas is the first to appear and is ordained as bishop. (MF)

157–94 (3) Miracle of the Boiled Infant: in her joy at the selection of Nicholas as bishop his hostess runs to the church, leaving her baby in a tub over a burning fire. She returns in terror, having realised what she has done, but finds the baby unharmed and playing with the bubbles in the boiling water.

195–204 (b) Transitional Remarks: Nicholas's good deeds are too numerous to recount or listen to; he practises perfect virtue. (MF)

205–12 (4) Miracle of the Possessed Child: Nicholas cures a child who, possessed by the Devil, tears at himself and his clothes. (F)

213–26 (5) Miracle of the Three Clerics (Clerks): Nicholas resurrects three young clerics murdered by their host. Wace explains that clerics honour Nicholas with good lessons and singing in thanks for this miracle.

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[11] Whenever possible, episode titles incorporate the short titles that Charles W. Jones gives to the legends ('verbal relics') in his *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari and Manhattan* (pp. 497–98). When Wace's version differs from the traditional account of the episode, Jones's title is indicated in parentheses. Jones does not treat each of the miracles that appear in Wace as a titled 'verbal relic' (e.g. the Miracle of the Paralytic).

227–74 (6) Miracle of the Mariners: when sailors pray to Nicholas for protection from a storm, he appears and calms the waves. They recognise him without help upon their arrival at his church. (MF)

275–336 (7) Miracle of the Grain Ships: during a famine, Nicholas requests grain from passing ships. When they arrive at their destination, the sailors find they have even more grain than when they embarked on the journey. The grain that Nicholas takes feeds his whole country for more than a year. (MF)

337–444 (8) Miracle of Diana and the Mediacon (Artemis, Firebomb): Wace explains that in pagan times devils pretended to be gods and goddesses to entice people to worship them. Nicholas destroys a statue of Diana in his efforts to eradicate pagan practices. In revenge Diana takes the form of a nun and gives some oil to pilgrims, asking them to anoint his church with it. After she vanishes, Nicholas appears as an anonymous holy man and tells the pilgrims to spread the oil upon the sea, whereupon it catches fire. (MF)

445–600 (9) Miracle of the Three Counts (Stratilates): Eparc, Constantine's prefect, betrays three counts (Nepocion, Arpelion and Urs), who pray to Nicholas, since they have seen him save three young men from unjust condemnation. Miraculously appearing to Constantine and Eparc, Nicholas threatens them with death if they do not release the counts. Once Constantine is convinced that the counts are not magicians, he sends them with precious gifts to visit Nicholas. (MF)

601–10 (c) Transitional Remarks: Nicholas performed numerous miracles, especially as a healer and saviour of those assailed by the Devil. (M)

611–32 (10) Nicholas's Death: on his deathbed, Nicholas cures a woman. He recites a psalm and then angels take his soul to paradise. (F)

633–50 (11) Miracle of the Myrrh (also Magnentius): a miraculously curative oil runs from Nicholas's tomb until his successor is wrongly banished. The oil reappears upon the man's return. (F)

651–722 (12) Miracle of the Statue of St Nicholas (Iconia): when a Christian tells a pagan toll collector that he can be rich if he honours a statue of Nicholas, the pagan entrusts all his money to

the statue and leaves it otherwise unguarded. Thieves steal the money and the pagan beats the statue when he discovers his loss. Frightened by a vision of Nicholas, the thieves return the money. The pagan and all his countrymen convert to Christianity. (MF)

723–806 (13) Miracle of the Broken Staff: a Christian gives a statue of Nicholas to a Jew as security for a loan. When the loan comes due, the Christian tricks the Jew by hiding all he owes in a staff and asking the Jew to hold it while the Christian swears on the statue that he has returned the money. Leaving the Jew cursing Nicholas, the Christian sets off for home but falls asleep in the road. A passing cart kills him and breaks the staff, revealing his deceit. The Jew promises to convert if Nicholas resurrects the man, which he does. The Jew and his whole household become Christians.

807–934 (14) Miracle of the Substituted Goblet (Cup): a man promises to give a precious goblet in Nicholas's honour and then decides to keep it for himself. He has a second, less valuable goblet made and travels with his family to offer it to Nicholas. During the voyage, his son and the original goblet are lost at sea. When the man arrives at Nicholas's church, the second goblet repeatedly falls from the altar. Both son and original goblet are restored after the man and his wife confess.

935–1092 (15) Miracle of the Son of Cethron (Getron): devoted to Nicholas, Cethron and Euphrosina build a church to house relics of the saint's clothes. In return, he answers their prayers for a child, who is born on the feast of St Nicholas and is baptised Deudoné. Pirates abduct the boy and sell him to a pagan emperor. On his birthday, Deudoné weeps, remembering his family and the feast in honour of Nicholas. The emperor strikes him. Nicholas appears and, taking the boy back to his home, he places him inside the locked church where his father is praying. Cethron and Euphrosina are the first to establish an annual celebration in honour of Nicholas's feast day. (M)

1093–156 (16) Miracle of the Murdered Merchant: An innkeeper murders and dismembers a merchant who is on a pilgrimage to St Nicholas. Appearing as a well-dressed knight, Nicholas

reassembles and resurrects the merchant. In the morning the astonished innkeeper decides to accompany the merchant on his pilgrimage to seek forgiveness for his sins.

1157–376 (17) Miracle of the Strangled Child (Lombard Son): on Nicholas's feast day, a pious man and his wife leave their son at home and go to church to honour the saint, despite the wife's frightening dream about a wolf eating her flesh. During their absence, a devil, disguised as a penitent, arrives and gives the boy an account, in roundabout terms, of Lucifer's fall and his own efforts to seduce people. He then strangles the boy. Returning home, the parents lament at length, but out of devotion to the clerics who are coming to share a meal they hide the body in a bedchamber and forbid the servants from showing any grief. During the meal, Nicholas appears, disguised as a pilgrim, and resurrects the boy.

1377–484 (18) Miracle of Nicholas's Tooth:[12] Wace explains that the oil issuing from Nicholas's tomb cured many people and that God refused to let Nicholas's body be moved from Myra. A king sends a spy to try to steal the body. In response to a prayer, Nicholas grants the man a tooth which then produces so much oil that the man cannot contain it and thus cannot steal the tooth. Nicholas appears to the man to admonish him and to retrieve his tooth.

1485–518 (19) Miracle of the Paralytic: during his lifetime, Nicholas cures a paralytic from Sibinos with oil from a lamp. (F)

1519–45 (20) Miracle of the Possessed Man: a possessed man beats his head so severely that the flesh rots. Nicholas cures him by making the sign of the cross over him. (F)[13]

1546–62 Epilogue: Wace recounts that he has translated the Life for Robert fitz Tout, who loved Nicholas dearly. Not all of Nicholas's great miracles are written down. Wace invites the audience to pray with him to God for pardon and salvation.

[12] Jones treats this miracle as part of the account of John the Archdeacon (pp. 201–02).
[13] On this episode, see the note to v. 1545.

In terms of its structure Wace's *Nicholas* is a miracle collection, a common genre in both Greek and Latin hagiography. These collections could function as evidence for a canonisation process or to promote the cult of the patron saint of a church in order to increase pilgrimages to the site. The short accounts featured miraculous resolutions to problems that ranged from the quotidian (toothaches) to the epic (wars). They were usually composed as part of the Life or Passion they accompanied, demonstrating the continuing presence of the saint in this world.[14] The genre appears to have held more moderate appeal for French lay audiences in the twelfth century.[15] Wace's *Nicholas* is the oldest of the surviving examples in French; the other twelfth-century Lives with extensive accounts of miracles are the Anglo-Norman *Life of St Edward the Confessor* by the anonymous nun of Barking Abbey, the French *Life of St Genevieve* by Renaut, and Denis Piramus's Anglo-Norman *Life of St Edmund*. Of these Wace pays the least attention to biographical details of the saint's life (less than ten per cent of the text), while the others recount at length the biography, sometimes enhanced by visions and cures, before devoting the final quarter of the work to posthumous miracles.

The structure of Wace's work may seem, at first glance, to be somewhat chaotic, which is not entirely unexpected of a genre dedicated to demonstrating the continuing efficacy of the saints through the on-going accumulation of stories about their good deeds. In the *Nicholas*, the miracles at first seem to follow a broadly chronological order, those accomplished during his life followed by the posthumous miracles, but the final two episodes take place much earlier than they appear in the Life, before the saint's death.[16] Despite this apparent disorder, Le Saux has identified a clear, but subtle logic to the arrangement of the miracles, with the later miracles echoing and expanding themes of the earlier ones (pp. 61–63). The final two miracles emphasise the saint's continuing presence and efficacy through his miraculous oil and through his episcopal powers. The

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[14] René Aigrain provides an overview of the genre of the miracle collection (*L'Hagiographie*, pp. 178–85). See also Martin Heinzelmann's discussion of the changing relationship between saintly biographies and miracle collections, ante as well as post mortem, in the eighth and ninth centuries ('Une source de base', esp. pp. 243–48).

[15] In the thirteenth century, however, collections of Marian miracles were enormously popular. For a brief overview of the twelfth-century Latin sources of the Miracles of the Virgin and their later translations into the vernacular, see 'Mary, Devotion To' (p. 596) in William W. Kibler and Grover A. Zinn, eds, *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*.

[16] Françoise Laurent sees no internal logic to the organisation, maintaining that the final two miracles destroy the work's harmony (*Plaire et édifier*, p. 292).

text concludes with the image of the bishop making the sign of the cross over a man whose friends have brought him before Nicholas: Nicholas is alive and responding to a community of faithful, and his gesture evokes that of his iconographical representations (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 63), so that the audience may think of the story, and perhaps of the work as a whole, when they see an image of the saint.

Sources and their Treatment

As Wace directly explains (vv. 36–44, 1546–48), his *Nicholas* is an adaptation of one or more Latin texts. However, as with the *Margaret*, no specific manuscript seems to preserve his exact source or sources.[17] The episodes Wace recounts mainly derive from two versions of the first Latin Life of St Nicholas, written by Johannes Diaconus (John the Deacon) from Naples, ca. 880.[18] Wace's primary source seems to have been the Life published in 1479 by Boninus Mombritius (Bonino Mombrizio) in his *Vitae sanctorum* and known as the Mombritius version. From time to time Wace may have interpolated episodes from a variant version printed in 1751 in the *S. Nicolai acta primigenia* of Nicolaus Carminius Falconius (Niccolò Carminio Falcone) and known as the Falconius version (Ronsjö, pp. 27–32). It is equally possible that Wace translated a Latin text that fused the Mombritius and Falconius versions, such as the Life preserved in the eleventh-century manuscript Paris, BNF, lat. 5607 (Ronsjö, p. 32).

Seven of the miracles in Wace's version do not appear in either Mombritius or Falconius. Wace probably found the miracle of Nicholas's tooth (Episode 18) in a copy of Johannes Archidiaconus of Bari's account of Nicholas's translation that was appended to Johannes Diaconus's text (Ronsjö, pp. 33–34). Similarly, he could have used a version of the Johannes Diaconus *Vita* that contained the miracles of the broken staff (Episode 13) and the substituted goblet (Episode 14), since these episodes appear in manuscripts of the *Vita* from the eleventh century onwards (Ronsjö, pp. 36–38). Ronsjö surmises that the large number of

[17] As Wace repeatedly observes (vv. 195–96, 601–04, 1551–56), Nicholas's miracles are innumerable, and the surviving Latin manuscripts suggest that the saint's story was adaptable to different audiences. Ronsjö refers in passing to a number of variants among Latin manuscripts (p. 33 n. 1; p. 35 n. 1 etc.).

[18] Gerardo S. Cioffari (*San Nicola nella critica storia*—hereafter Cioffari 1987—p. 93) dates the Johannes Diaconus *Vita* to ca. 880; Ronsjö, following Gustav Anrich, dates it to the third quarter of the ninth century (p. 8).

twelfth-century copies of the murdered merchant miracle (Episode 16) reflect a tradition that was already strong when Wace composed his poem, but no Latin text of the story has yet been dated to the period before Wace's *Nicholas*, so it is possible that the Latin is a translation of Wace. In any case, the texts are closely related (Ronsjö, pp. 39–42).

The source of the miracle of the three clerics (Episode 5) is even more uncertain. Wace suggests that the story is already well known. He comments on the widespread devotion of clerics due to this miracle (vv. 223–26) and underscores the brevity of his account (v. 214), as if to say that a longer narrative would be superfluous. The legend appears in eleventh-century hymns and in dramas from the eleventh or early twelfth century, including a play preserved in the Fleury playbook. Wace appears to have been the first to narrate the miracle in a Life of St Nicholas (Otto E. Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, pp. 26–28). The two remaining miracles, the boiled infant (Episode 3) and the strangled child (Episode 17), may well derive from oral traditions, since Wace does suggest that he combined written and oral sources (vv. 1555–57) and no written source has yet been identified (Ronsjö, p. 44).

If Wace did compile stories from different sources, the episodic structure that characterises the Nicholas Lives from their earliest exemplar (the Greek *Vita per Michaelem*, from which Johannes Diaconus's *Vita* ultimately derives; see Cult, p. 252) certainly facilitated his work. The relative independence of each tale allows the inclusion of new material without necessitating additional changes and frees the author from the obligation to include any individual story or to follow a strict order. Nonetheless, the order of the miracles does not appear to change much. Wace's version follows the sequence used in the Mombritius version and only rearranges three of the Falconius miracles. In one instance, the move groups two miracles related to children: the possessed child miracle (Episode 4) appears immediately after the boiled infant rather than later in the Life. In the other, the final two miracles of Wace's text occur much earlier in Falconius (Ronsjö, p. 33). The result is somewhat disconcerting, since these miracles, performed during Nicholas's lifetime, now follow the posthumous works. However, it was presumably Wace's aim to keep these two episodes apart from earlier stories of healing (3, c, 9), in order to emphasise this aspect of Nicholas's achievements and to conclude the work by giving the impression that Nicholas was still a living force (see Structure, pp. 246–47).

More work remains to be done on the manuscripts of Johannes Diaconus's *Vita* before a fuller appreciation of Wace's treatment of his sources is possible. Ronsjö's study, however, suggests that Wace probably

offers a faithful, but thoughtful translation with some modification for his particular audience. The editor's comparison of Wace's version of the murdered merchant miracle (Episode 16) to its Latin counterpart, and of the Mombritius and Falconius renderings of the three counts miracle (Episode 9) with the version in Wace, shows that Wace sometimes follows the Latin very closely (Ronsjö, pp. 29–33, 40–41). Still, his translation is far from servile and it is clear that he adapts his material to his lay audience. In the goblet miracle (Episode 14), for example, Wace significantly develops his characterisation of the parents who lose their child overboard: the mother plays an active role throughout and the audience learns of both parents' emotions in much greater detail (Ronsjö, p. 38). In contrast, as Le Saux notes, the mother in the son of Cethron miracle (Episode 15) plays a far greater role in the Mombritius version than in Wace's *Nicholas*. By shifting the emphasis on to the male characters, Wace shapes the miracle to articulate clearly the distinct roles of laypeople and clerics (*Companion*, pp. 70–73). In general, Le Saux finds that Wace probably abbreviated his source or sources by reducing or eliminating didactic commentary and direct discourse (p. 65) and that his adaptations result in a more compassionate, more saintly Nicholas (pp. 67, 69).

The Cult of St Nicholas

Due both to Nicholas's widespread and continuing importance throughout Europe and to his double life as Santa Claus, the rich and complex tradition of the saint's cult has been the subject of extensive research.[19] Although historians do not agree on whether or not there is an historical basis for the legend, numerous texts repeat the essence of Nicholas's story. The only son of wealthy parents, he is said to have been born in Patara in the late third or early fourth century, in the province of Lycia in south-west Anatolia. During the reign of Diocletian (284–305) he became bishop of Myra, also in Lycia (near modern Demre in the Antalya province of Turkey). Nicholas is thought to have been imprisoned and

[19] The most authoritative works on Nicholas's cult are Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* (primarily for the Eastern Church, with editions of all the texts Anrich knew, including variant versions and critical analysis), Karl Meisen, *Nikolauskult und Nikolausbrauch* (for the Western Church; a cultural study of texts, institutions, folklore and practices), Cioffari 1987 (extensive historical commentary with reproductions of a number of early documents and editions) and Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra* (the development of Nicholas's legend from the earliest evidence to the twentieth century).

tortured by Diocletian; he was released from prison by Constantine the Great (Emperor 306–37). He may have condemned Aryanism at the First Council of Nicaea in 325. Tradition has it that he died in Myra between 334 and 343 and was buried in the cathedral there; curative oil, or myrrh, is said to have flowed from his tomb (now in Bari, Italy) from the time of his burial to the present. Numerous miracles and good deeds have been attributed to him. Of these the most widely known are three accounts of rescues. He is said to have saved three girls from prostitution by throwing gold for dowries through their window at night. He is also credited with rescuing sailors in distress off the coast of Lycia. Lastly, he is famous for saving three young men from execution by knocking the sword out of the executioner's hand and revealing the bribery that led to their condemnation; three of Constantine's officers who witnessed this intercession later called on St Nicholas when they were unjustly condemned to death and he duly came to their rescue. These achievements are represented in Wace's poem (but for his modifications to the tale of the three young men and the three counts, see the note to v. 600). Nicholas's feast day is December 6.

It would appear that no primary evidence for any of these details, or even for the existence of the saint, survives from the first two hundred years after the supposed date of his death.[20] Nonetheless, some of the earliest surviving evidence for a St Nicholas, bishop of Myra in Lycia, suggests that the cult was already well established by the sixth century. In one text, possibly composed between 515 and 520, Theodore the Reader (Theodorus Lector) lists 'Nicolaus of Myra of Lycia' among those present at the momentous Council of Nicaea in 325.[21] The Life of another St Nicholas (of Sion), which may have been composed shortly after 564, depicts Nicholas's martyrium

[20] There is some evidence to suggest that the narrative *Praxis de stratelatis* dates to shortly after the saint's death (ca. 334; see below) and an encomium attributed to Proclo of Constantinople (390–446) may have been composed as early as the fifth century. Cioffari, 'San Nicola nelle fonti letterarie' (hereafter Ciffari 2006), acknowledges Anrich's scepticism about the attribution to Proclo (Anrich, II, pp. 160–61, 336–38), but argues that the encomium's concision suggests a very early date, and certainly before Andreas of Crete composed his encomium (p. 31). See also Cioffari 1987, pp. 18–21. Proclo's encomium survives in two tenth-century manuscripts.

[21] Theodore's work survives in one twelfth- or thirteenth-century manuscript and it is possible that the name was added as the text was recopied. See Cioffari 2006, p. 31, and Cioffari 1987, pp. 24–27 (with a facsimile of the relevant page of the twelfth-century manuscript).

in Myra as a place of worship.[22] Another early reference to a church in Nicholas's honour is Procopius's mention (ca. 560) of the basilica of St Priscus and St Nicholas, built in Constantinople perhaps as early as 490 and renovated by Justinian (Cioffari 1987, pp. 47–48). A fourth source possibly from the sixth century, Eustratius of Constantinople's treatise *De statu animarum post mortem* (ca. 583) uses one of Nicholas's miracles (Episode 9, the three counts) as proof in his argument that souls work independently from the body. Eustratius cites, as his source, a Life of St Nicholas.[23] As Cioffari points out (2006, p. 32), the existence of such a text, together with the fact that Eustratius cites it among references to the Bible and other highly authoritative texts, provides further testimony for an already significant cult.

Indeed, Eustratius's citation of this miracle may indicate that much earlier textual evidence of Nicholas's life survives in the anonymous *Praxis de stratelatis* (*Deed of the Commanders*), a version of the miracle of the three counts (Episode 9). Cioffari maintains that the Life to which Eustratius refers must have contained the *Praxis* itself, since the two texts repeat verbatim a significant amount of material. Moreover, almost all the sources Eustratius cites in his treatise date from the second half of the fourth to the beginning of the fifth century. Cioffari thus concludes that the *Praxis* was composed between the period shortly after Nicholas's death and the first half of the fifth century (1987, pp. 44–45).[24] Whether or not the surviving *Praxis* does represent such an early testimony to Nicholas's life and miracles, the narrative clearly played a key role in the development of Nicholas's cult. It circulated widely, becoming a central episode of almost

[22] See Ihor Ševčenko and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion*, pp. 11, §8, p. 29. Nicholas of Sion, another Lycian, was the abbot of the Monastery of Holy Sion and then bishop of Pinara. In the Life he visits Nicholas's martyrium in Myra before undertaking a pilgrimage to the holy land. The precision of the narrative with regard to proper names of people and places strongly suggests that the author knew the events, or at least the monastery records, very well (pp. 11–12).

[23] Cioffari 2006, p. 32. Although Eustratius seems to have lived in the sixth century, the manuscripts of his treatise, and the surviving references to it, all date to the ninth century or later (Eustratius Presbyter, *Eustratii Presbyteri Constantinopolitani De statu animarum post mortem*, pp. xxviii, xl–lii).

[24] Although Cioffari makes a compelling case that the *Praxis* and *De statu animarum* transmit part of a very early Life, and this in spite of the fact that no manuscripts of either text survive from before the ninth century, it is not entirely clear that the *Praxis* in its entirety was contained in the fourth- or fifth-century version of the Life, since much of the *Praxis* does not appear in Eustratius's treatise. The *Praxis* could be contemporary to Eustratius's treatise and like it, may have incorporated parts of the earlier Life. Anrich dates the *Praxis* to 460–580 (II, p. 370), Karl Meisen to the sixth century (p. 219).

all subsequent Greek writings about Nicholas (Gustav Anrich, II, p. 375), including the oldest surviving full Life of St Nicholas, the *Vita per Michaelem* attributed to Michael the Archimandrite and possibly composed as early as 700.[25] The *Stratelatis* legend likely became the first account of the saint to be translated into Latin; knowledge of it in the Latin world may even date to the seventh century (Cioffari 1987, pp. 49–52).[26]

As Cioffari remarks, the historicity of Nicholas's story has come under suspicion since the time of Nicoló Carmine Falcone (1681–1759, Archbishop of Santa Severina) and, in light of the copious amount of unverifiable material about his life, the Vatican eventually reclassified his memorial, like that of Margaret, from obligatory to optional (1987, p. 9). Although, as noted above, there are strong textual indications of the early development of the cult, and some iconographic testimony may survive from the seventh or eighth century,[27] most of the extant textual and material evidence suggests that the cult began to expand only in the ninth century. In fact, few of the earliest works cited above survive in manuscripts copied before the tenth century. Among the most important testimonies to the literary tradition of Nicholas's cult are the 'narrative encomium' (Cioffari 1987, p. 76) known as the *Methodius ad Theodorum*, a Life based on the *Vita per Michaelem* and written ca. 817–21 (Cioffari 1987, pp. 75–77). Although it only exists in one copy today, its Latin translation by John the Deacon (Johannes Diaconus, ca. 880) became the principal source for western Lives of Nicholas throughout the Middle Ages (Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra*, p. 47; see also Cioffari 1987, p. 95). While surviving numbers of manuscripts offer a somewhat unreliable idea of the actual popularity of a text, the data for Johannes's Life of St Nicholas is confirmed by extensive textual and material evidence: only a handful of copies survive from the tenth century, but more than five times as many from the eleventh, and

[25] Cioffari 1987, pp. 59–60. Cioffari also summarises the arguments for dating the text to the early ninth century (including Anrich's), pp. 58–59.

[26] Jones also claims that the legend was in circulation in the seventh century in Greek, Latin and Syriac, but the *BHL* text he cites (6106) does not survive in any manuscripts earlier than the tenth century (*Saint Nicholas of Myra*, p. 29). Meisen cites Richenau Codex XXXII (ca. 800–841) as the oldest evidence for Latin circulation of the legend (pp. 219, 527).

[27] Images of Nicholas may appear on seventh- or eighth-century seals and paintings, but identification is difficult, since Nicholas of Sion and Nicholas of Myra were both bishops venerated in the same areas. See, for example, Plate I.2, p. 183 in *San Nicola: splendori d'arte d'Oriente e d'Occidente*, and Jean-Claude Cheynet's explanation in his 'I.2 *Sigillo di san Nicola*, VII secolo' (pp. 187–88).

these numbers double again in the twelfth.[28] Shortly before 966 Reginold of Eichstatt's adaptation of this Life into a full liturgy for Nicholas's feast day likely played an important role in the expansion of the cult (Karl Meisen, *Nikolauskult und Nikolausbrauch im Abendlande*, pp. 505–56; Jones, pp. 108, 112–23). The liturgy includes references to many of the episodes that occur in Wace's Life (Episodes a, 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11; Jones, p. 115). By the early eleventh century Nicholas's feast was a red-letter day in calendars from Bavaria and Liège (Jones, pp. 124, 141), and shortly thereafter places of worship began to be dedicated to the saint. The earliest of these in north-western France was the abbey of Saint-Nicholas d'Angers dedicated in 1020 for Fulk Nerra, Count of Anjou (987–1040), after the count had successfully called on Nicholas in a storm at sea during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Jones, pp. 103–04). The following sixty years saw the consecration to Nicholas of over fifty sites of worship in France and Germany, including, in Normandy, chapels near Rouen and in the Vexin and a priory in Honfleur (Meisen, pp. 126–65); in Caen, both the crypt of the church of Sainte-Trinité and a church of St Nicholas may have been dedicated to the saint in 1083 (Christophe Collet et al., *Caen, cité médiévale*, pp. 66, 72). All of the evidence testifies to a strong devotion to Nicholas in the decades leading up to the translation of his relics from Myra to Bari.

In 1087 merchants from Bari, profiting from the confusion caused when Myra and its shrine fell to the Seljuks, stole Nicholas's reputed relics and transferred them to their home town in Apulia. A new church was built there to house the relics and Bari immediately became a place of pilgrimage. Once the relics had arrived in Italy, new miracles were attributed to the saint. Since Bari was part of the Norman territories, monasteries in Normandy gained special access to relics of the saint's body and former tomb. Of particular note, given the tooth miracle in Wace's poem (Episode 18), a daughter cell of the abbey of Saint-Evroult was founded at Noron, near Bayeux, to house one of St Nicholas's teeth (Marjorie M. Chibnall, 'The Translation of the Relics of St Nicholas', pp. 35–36). More generally, the translation of Nicholas's relics quickly stimulated devotion to the saint across Europe, such that, even before the end of the century, narratives relating to Nicholas appear more frequently than texts about any other holy person, with the exceptions of Jesus, Benedict and Peter

[28] *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina manuscripta* dossier for 'Nicolaus ep. Myrensis'. The numbers for *BHL* 6106 are typical: tenth century 4; tenth or eleventh 2; eleventh 25; eleventh or twelfth 4; twelfth 43.

the Apostle (Guy Philippart and Michel Trigalet, 'L'Hagiographie latine du XI^e^ siècle', p. 292). At the same time, and continuing in the twelfth century, episodes from the Nicholas legend were used as the basis for plays.[29] Nicholas's popularity continued to grow throughout the twelfth century, as increasing numbers of manuscripts of the Johannes Diaconus *Vita*, new compositions in Latin and the vernaculars and new church dedications all attest (Meisen, pp. 108–10, 126–71; Jones, pp. 225–30). To this day Nicholas is patron saint of Greece, Russia, Apulia, Sicily and Lorraine and also of a number of cities, provinces and dioceses, and he is venerated especially in Austria, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and France. His devotees include sailors (especially in the East), children (especially in the West, enhanced by his incarnation as Santa Claus),[30] bakers, students, young people, travellers, prisoners, merchants, pawnbrokers and many others.

Themes

Wace creates a unified work out of a diverse body of tales by highlighting, through thematic repetition, key ideas concerning the saint and his devotees. From the prologue onwards the author indicates the universality of Nicholas's effectiveness as a miracle worker, but the saint's prominent characteristics, compassion and justice, only become fully evident from his repeated actions over the course of the narrative. Although the saint provides aid to all types of people, the recurrence of crises involving children or wealth (or both) suggests Nicholas's specific efficacy in these situations. Wace seems to be constantly mindful of his own status as cleric, perhaps specifically as a *clerc lisant*. Clergy appear throughout the work as assistants to both the lay protagonists and to Nicholas himself.

Universal Efficacy

Already in the prologue Wace appeals to a wide audience representing all levels of society ('Knights and burgesses, / Peasants and courtiers', vv. 17–18), and a range of experiences and qualities ('Some are lay, some are lettered, / Some are fools and some wise', vv. 9–10). The characters who appear in the different miracles reinforce this breadth, reflecting most

[29] See Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 307–60.

[30] For the complicated set of traditions and legends that produced Santa Claus, see Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra*, pp. 309–65.

of the spectrum of medieval society. Those who receive help from the saint include both men and women; a Jew, a pagan and various Christian clerics and laypeople; the wealthy and the poor; sailors and townspeople; fathers, mothers and children.[31] The antagonists of the stories also cover a broad range, from the Devil himself and the goddess Diana to murderous innkeepers, the Emperor Constantine, thieves and pirates, Christians who do not keep their oaths, a pagan emperor and a relic thief.[32] In the background of the tales, the secondary characters evoke the full array of social classes: clerics, the laity, knights, burgesses, peasants, courtiers, sailors, prisoners, pagans, magistrates, thieves and pirates, unspecified lords, husbands, serving-men, a herdsman, members of various households, bailiffs, counsellors, an army, a crowd, Constantine's men, three young men condemned to death, the sick, rich people, poor and needy people and worthy men.[33] There are no extended descriptions of any of these characters and little information is given about their personalities, so most references are general enough to allow the audience to imagine themselves and their acquaintances in similar situations.

The problems that Nicholas solves also cover a broad spectrum and occur in a variety of places and times. They range from illness, accident, demonic possession and natural disasters (famine and storms at sea)

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[31] Poor man with three daughters (vv. 81–120), three clerics (vv. 213–26), sailors (227–72), three counts (vv. 445–600), Nicholas's successor as archbishop of Myra (vv. 633–50), a pagan toll-keeper (vv. 663–718), a Jew (vv. 729–806), a man who loses his son in an apparent drowning (vv. 814–934), a wealthy man called Cethron whose child is abducted (vv. 935–1092), a merchant (vv. 1097–156), a man from Lombardy whose child is strangled by the Devil (vv. 1165–376), a paralytic (vv. 1487–518) and a man possessed by the Devil (vv. 1520–45).

[32] The Devil or devils, including the goddess Diana (vv. 206, 338–436, 1157–250), murdering innkeepers (vv. 215–20, 1101–56), the Emperor Constantine and his prefect Eparc (vv. 449–594), those who expelled his successor unjustly (vv. 643–50), thieves who steal a pagan's treasure (vv. 681–712), a Christian who refuses to repay his debt to a Jew (vv. 724–806), the man who offers him an inferior goblet (vv. 814–934), the pirates who steal Cethron's child and the pagan emperor who buys him as a servant (vv. 1015–48), the man who tries to take away one of the saint's teeth as a memento (vv. 1403–84).

[33] Laity (vv. 9, 43, 615, 654, 959), knights (v. 17), burgesses (v. 17), peasants (v. 18), courtiers (v. 18), Nicholas's father and mother (v. 49), sailors (vv. 231, 286, 385, 860), prisoners (v. 665), pagans (v. 659), magistrates (v. 704), thieves and pirates (vv. 718, 1015), unspecified lords (vv. 227, 275, 411), unspecified husbands (v. 114), serving-men (vv. 1251, 1285, 1316), a herdsman (v. 780), bailiffs (vv. 316, 323), occupants of a house (v. 1197), a great army (v. 505), Constantine's men (v. 507), a crowd (v. 1336), three young men condemned to death (v. 477), the king of the region of Myra (v. 1401), cripples and the sick (vv. 608, 1392–94), the rich (v. 12), the poor and needy (vv. 12, 292, 488), the wise (v. 10), the foolish (v. 10), envious and treacherous counsellors (v. 455), worthy men ('prodommes', v. 404).

to murder, perjury and abduction.[34] Although Wace does not mention the location of many of the miracles, he does note sites around the Mediterranean for some of them: Myra, Alexandria, Escorande, Lombardy, Patras (Patara, Asia Minor), Rome, Sivin (Sibinos, near Myra).[35] Nicholas's ability to appear to people in spiritual form, both during and after his life (vv. 251–56, 405–24, 483–534, 699–710, 915–22, 1052–64, 1111–29, 1326–54, 1464–75) suggests that distance and time pose no obstacles to his efficacy. Similarly, the Life shows that he is as effective after his death as during his life; in fact, Wace develops the posthumous miracles more fully. In two transitional interventions and in the epilogue, Wace indicates that it would be difficult or impossible for him to relate all of Nicholas's miracles, suggesting an even wider range of problems and of beneficiaries of the saint's aid. He thus presents Nicholas as a universally helpful saint.[36] Possessed of Christ-like powers, the saint acts for those who honour and support him, as a bastion against the evils of the world.

Children and Wealth

While reaching out to a broad audience, Wace repeatedly highlights two concerns common to a range of social classes: children and wealth. In fact, the very first developed story that Wace recounts combines the two themes: the well-known tale of Nicholas giving three bags of gold as dowries for a poor man's daughters. Over a third of the episodes involve children or youths, usually with their parents (Episodes 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 16). Nicholas tends to be seen as the patron saint of children, but Wace clearly understands this patronage from a parental perspective (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 62). The children face demonic possession, boiling, drowning, murder by axe and by strangling, abduction or a life of prostitution, but we never learn their reactions to these dangers in Wace's version of the miracles. Instead, the author concentrates wholly and empathically

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[34] Illness (Episodes c, 10, 11, 19), accident (Episodes 3, 13, 14), demonic possession (Episodes 4, c, 20), natural disasters (Episodes 6, 7), murder (Episodes 5, 9, 16, 17), perjury (Episodes 13, 14, 18), abduction (Episode 15).

[35] Myra (vv. 123, 355, 472, 516, 1381, 1402), Alexandria (v. 297), Escorande (vv. 937, 1054), Lombardy (v. 1165), Patras (v. 45), Rome (v. 486), Sivin (v. 1500).

[36] See also Karl D. Uitti's discussion of the range of communities, both of the audience and of the characters, evoked in the *Nicholas*: 'In this fashion the history of the ancient community of Myra is rendered relevant to Wace's contemporary Anglo-Norman community: a genuine *translatio* takes place. Wace's *poetic* activity—his intercession—is thus largely equivalent to the *matière* of Nicholas's life: both are *works*' ('The Clerkly Narrator Figure', p. 401).

on the parents. In some miracles he merges the experiences of the parents and children, so that their suffering is shared. In the story in which a mother takes her insane son to Nicholas to be cured, it is impossible even to identify which character is the subject of the verbs that convey the affliction:

> A woman had a child
> Who was filled with the devil.
> She/He rent her/his clothes, gnawed her/his hands
> And passed her/his life in great sorrow.
> She/He tore at her/his clothing
> With her/his hands and her/his teeth.
> When Saint Nicholas blessed him,
> He freed him from the devil. (vv. 205–12)

In the Old French there are no subject pronouns, and possessive adjectives agree with the noun they modify rather than with the possessor. Consequently, the actions can be read either as describing the son's madness or the mother's great sorrow; in a sense, the emotion is one and the same.[37] Throughout the parent-child miracles, by concentrating on emotion and by showing parental fears and sorrows in different situations, the author demonstrates that many different kinds of parents in different circumstances can benefit from devoting themselves to Nicholas.

The episodes involving wealth show a similar diversity of characters and situations. Five episodes focus specifically on this topic (1, 11, 12, 13, 15) and roughly half of all the episodes involve riches or wealthy protagonists. In the five that concentrate on wealth the protagonists range from a family that was formerly rich but lost everything, a pagan toll-collector who loses and then regains his wealth and a poor man and a moneylender who are at odds, to a very wealthy man who wants to make a gift in Nicholas's honour and a merchant who is murdered for his great wealth. Wace notes the noble rank of Nicholas himself, of the three counts who are unjustly condemned to death, of Constantine, and of the king who sends a spy to steal a relic, but generally he avoids identifying the status of the characters. We do not even learn the rank of Cethron (Episode 14), who is powerful and wealthy enough to assemble the clergy of Nicholas's church, obtain a relic (clothing) and build a church in which to house it.

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[37] The parents of the drowned boy in Episode 13 similarly '[tear] at their hair, [rend] their clothes' (v. 857); the madman in Episode 19 violently injures his own head (vv. 1525–32). In the translation of vv. 205–12 we have attributed the actions to the son.

The lack of specific identifying information again invites the audience to imagine the characters as they wish.

The sympathetic treatment of parenthood and of money problems might seem unusual in the Life of a saint who distributes his entire inheritance to the poor (vv. 75–80) and dedicates himself to chastity (v. 201).[38] Unlike the earliest French *Life of St Alexis* (ed. Christopher Storey, vv. 59, 108), Wace rarely indicates that attachment to family or possessions is sinful. On the contrary, the pain that results from these attachments constitutes the central problem to be resolved if the stories are to end happily. The happy ending—the miracle—occurs when Nicholas restores the child or wealth to the sufferers. In this way the Life shows respect for the value the protagonists place on their children and possessions. At the same time, the point of the stories is clearly not the material world: people and things are most valuable as opportunities for demonstrating virtues. Since Nicholas restores the *status quo* in almost all the miracles and his beneficiaries rarely receive material gains, the emphasis falls on his beneficiaries' experience of the miracle and on the wisdom they gain from it.[39]

Compassion and Justice

The principal virtues that recur in the Life are compassion and justice. Wace not only provides models of these virtues in Nicholas's and the other characters' behaviour; he even creates opportunities for the audience to practise them. Just as he merges the experience of the mother and possessed son, the author blurs the lines between the experiences of the saint, the other characters and the audience. In contrast to his treatment of Margaret, he rarely relates Nicholas's thoughts or motivations;[40] rather he communicates to the audience the emotions of a situation and lets the audience deduce the saint's reasoning from his actions. When, near the beginning of the Life, a mother leaves her baby in a boiling bath to attend Nicholas's ordination, Wace recounts neither the mother's thoughts nor Nicholas's, but instead shapes the details of the account to engage the audience's emotions. Although the result is predictably miraculous, Wace calls upon the audience's earthly logic and instinctive compassion by

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[38] Unlike other versions, Wace's *Nicholas* does not suggest that the saint hated and feared women (Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 78).

[39] The possible exceptions are Cethron and Euphrosina whose devotional acts at the beginning of their story accompany a request for a child, who is then born on St Nicholas's day. However, the point of the story is the child's rescue later in his life.

[40] Only once does Wace explain Nicholas's reason for action (vv. 1330–31).

deferring his assurance that the baby is safe and, indeed, by heightening the tension. He relates in detail the movements that convey the increasing heat of the water ('The fire took hold, the water got hot. / Then it began to bubble, / To stir and to quiver', vv. 170–72) and reminds the audience that the baby's 'body was tender and bare' (v. 174). In a text as devoid of detail as Wace's *Nicholas*, these elements conjure up an especially vivid and distressing image. However, before proceeding, the poet reassures the audience that the child was 'playing with the bubbles and taking hold of them' and did not feel any pain (vv. 176–78). By reassuring the audience, he allows them to concentrate fully, in the conclusion of the miracle, on the mother's emotion. With limited details and no direct articulation of the mother's thoughts, he vividly evokes her terror, merely saying that 'she went running to the lodging, / Shouting out her son's name / [...] Like a demented woman' (vv. 183–84, 186). Her pain and fear seem all the more overpowering in that they are not, perhaps cannot be, described. The miracle ends on an ambiguous note that emphasises the shared nature of the experience. Is the 'miracle que lui avint' (v. 191), which the woman relates to everyone, the 'miracle that had befallen her' [the mother] or the 'miracle that had befallen him' [the baby]?

Wace does not directly credit Nicholas with this miracle, and, in fact, a number of the miracles happen without the saint explicitly performing them, but the author implies the saint's responsibility in the lines that directly follow ('It would be difficult for me to relate / [...] The great miracles and the good deeds / That he performed', vv. 195, 197–98). The lack of attribution blends Nicholas's powers with God's: miracles accompany the saint and show his union with God, who is their ultimate source, whether Nicholas accomplishes the miracles actively or passively.[41] The emphasis on fear and horror in the miracle of the boiled infant implies that the reason the baby has been saved is that God or Nicholas or both felt compassion for the mother and her child; if the audience, too, feels for the mother, they are practising the virtue of compassion. If they give responsibility for the miracle to Nicholas, they are exercising their faith in the saint and practising their devotion to him.

Wace similarly engages the audience's sense of justice in order to convey Nicholas's saintliness, to narrate compelling stories and to offer the audience the opportunity to practise virtue. Nearly half of the stories involve

[41] When his beneficiaries attempt to thank him (vv. 112–13, 270–72, 443–44), Nicholas repeatedly credits God with the miracles.

crimes, so Nicholas frequently occupies the role of judge and enforcer of justice. Notably, the majority of these miracles fuse the two character traits: Nicholas usually delivers justice with compassion. In one of the more horrible stories, a man strangles and dismembers a merchant pilgrim who has taken lodging with him (Episode 15, vv. 1093–156). Rather than punishing the murderer, Nicholas reassembles the pilgrim and departs. In the morning the murderer is so astonished that he confesses his wrong-doing to his erstwhile victim; they make peace and go on pilgrimage together to St Nicholas. The miracle presents an alternative to the type of justice that involves retribution: compassion for the victim can elicit forgiveness rather than anger towards the criminal. In this miracle it is Nicholas who models the virtuous behaviour, but in others the saint's actions are more punitive and create the opportunity for the other characters, and even the audience, to combine compassion and justice.[42] Episode 12 tells of a Christian who borrows money from a Jew and then tricks him, stealing the money. When the Christian is run over and killed by a cart, which also breaks open the staff in which he had hidden the money, the Jew is happy but says he will convert only if the saint resurrects the perjurer, which is what happens. In the preceding miracle Nicholas only has to threaten bodily harm to thieves to convince them to return their loot, so the death of the Christian seems unnecessarily punitive. However, the greater punishment in this tale allows for a greater miracle, and this miracle is due to the Jew's compassion towards his adversary. The story thus provides a clear lesson concerning the power of compassion. Here, it is even more effective than devotion to Nicholas alone.

While the miracles of the murdered merchant and the broken staff provide clear examples of compassionate justice, the miracle of the goblet (Episode 13) engages the audience more actively. A large part of the dramatic tension derives here from the questionable nature of Nicholas's justice. The 'facts' of the story are difficult to reconcile with a just and paternal image of Nicholas and certainly with the deep appreciation of the parent-child bond that Wace has conveyed up to this point. Even though the protagonist undertakes the expense and hardship of a pilgrimage to

[42] A number of the miracles around the midpoint of the Life suggest a sterner image of Nicholas. Wace depicts the bishop as violently 'destroying and shattering' Diana's statue (vv. 361–62), an action which is assuredly justified, but which nonetheless seems out of keeping with his otherwise gentle manner. In the next two punitive miracles, the saint threatens wrongdoers with various forms of death and suffering and these threats are enough to correct them.

make an offering to Nicholas, he still loses his son overboard, apparently as punishment for keeping the better offering he had promised to the saint. The pacing of the account and several rhetorical flourishes further contribute to the sense that the saint responds with excessive force and lack of compassion to a personal slight. Wace relates the actual accident briefly in dry, factual tones (vv. 847–50) and then immediately develops an extensive depiction of the parents' grief (vv. 851–66), evoking the all-encompassing nature of their sorrow in a way that solicits compassion (cf. Françoise Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, pp. 351–52). The repetitions of certain words and the use of synonymous terms evoke the tonalities of grief: the obsessive, inescapable and continuously wounding consciousness of loss. The parallels between this scene and the boiled infant miracle are instructive.[43] Like the agonized mother, the parents here call out their son's name, and, as in the earlier miracle, Wace both conveys parental suffering solely through actions (with no reference to thoughts) and also defers his reassurance that the child is safe, although here the audience might experience the shock of tragic loss alongside the parents, since Wace postpones the reassurance even more. Indeed, Wace brings the audience into the text through two apostrophes (vv. 851, 862). The audience might easily have been witnesses of the events; they are now witnesses of the recreated event.

By soliciting their sympathy for the parents, Wace prods the audience into pondering the justice of the parents' suffering, especially since they appear to lose their son because of a slight to Nicholas. Towards the end of the miracle, at the moment of epiphany, the parents' assessment of the events unequivocally identifies the loss of their son as punishment for their own sins (vv. 902–04). From this perspective the severity of the punishment reveals the severity of the sin. The parents' profound suffering out of love for their son uncovers the tepidity of their love for Nicholas, evident in their casual decision not to give him the promised cup. They have not felt the love that is due to God and to the saint until the miracle of the goblet's rejection links their love for their son to their unloving actions towards Nicholas. In the context of the preceding miracle of the Jew and the perjurer, it is evident that going through the motions—or speaking the literal truth when it is not the full truth—is sinful. What is more, by heightening the punishment in the goblet miracle, the parents' sin seems

[43] Le Saux notes parallels between the two miracles in their 'baptismal symbolism' (*Companion*, p. 75).

to be worse than that of the perjurer. In order to understand the justice of the miracle, the audience must see that tepid faith and tepid love are sins worthy of horrifying punishment.

The audience's sympathy for the parents engages them in a profound form of compassion, again echoing the preceding story, where all the Christian onlookers are happy at the perjurer's justified death and only the Jew appears to feel pity. In the goblet miracle, for the first time in the work as a whole, the author encourages the audience to sympathise with the wrong-doers. The happy ending is not that the parents receive their just punishment and their victim receives his due: it is that the parents understand their sin and regain their son. Like all the other suffering parents in Wace's work, they benefit from Nicholas's compassion and win the audience's, but unlike the other parents, they are far from innocent victims. Their particular sin, covetousness, also highlights the danger that material wealth poses. As a symbol of love, given willingly to the saint, the goblet is a valuable object, but as something to be kept to oneself for personal enjoyment it is a fatal snare.

Clergy

As the goblet miracle shows the importance of devotional actions as expressions of love for St Nicholas, it also illustrates the vital relationship between lay devotion and the clergy. Although they hardly appear, clergy play a key role right at the climactic moment of the tale: in order to recover their son, the parents must confess their sins, necessarily to priests. Here, as throughout the work, Wace achieves a delicate balance in his depiction of lay-clerical relations. The clergy are, in part, servants to the laity who are there to be 'summoned' (v. 906) by the laypeople at moments of need, and also in part allies whom the laity need in order to communicate fully with the saint and with God.

This balance reflects at once the secular patronage of the work and Wace's apparent desire to promote the life he himself no doubt led, one dominated by clerical duties, including the celebration of saints' feast days. In the opening lines of his prologue he makes it clear that his preoccupation in this work will be not only with Nicholas's good deeds and miracles, but also with the feast day. Clerics, he says, must speak of the saints, but they must also explain how each feast day came to be established and celebrated (vv. 1–7). For their part, laypeople must join with the clergy to honour God in their own ways (vv. 17–32). Throughout, the clergy appear when laypeople want to honour Nicholas, particularly during his feast, and

each interaction models effective relationships between the two groups. For example, in the episode recounting the birth and abduction of the child of Cethron and Euphrosina, the father hopes that Nicholas's prayers will help his wife to conceive, but when he journeys to Myra he discovers that Nicholas is dead. So he gathers together all the principal clerics who were looking after the body ('mestrez clercs', v. 966, also called 'chapelein', v. 985) and begs them to allow him to take away part of Nicholas's clothing (vv. 966–86). On his return home, he accepts his wife's advice and founds a new church, placing within it his newly acquired holy relic (vv. 989–93). When their son Deudoné is born, seemingly as a result of the proximity of Nicholas's garments, his parents demonstrate their great love for Nicholas by serving and honouring him, and also making sure that his feast day is conducted to the best of their ability. They see to it that the ceremony is accompanied by readings and singing and that the clerics who provide them are richly dressed (vv. 1005–10). Later, Deudoné's rescue is triggered by his realisation that he is missing the great festival of St Nicholas, which his father and mother would be holding on that day. At home, the boy muses, there would be a great assembly of clerics from the entire region, who would have been summoned to celebrate Nicholas's feast with fine singing, both high and low ('halt et bas', v. 1043). His pagan captor is not sympathetic when he hears the boy's explanation of his tears, but Nicholas soon arrives to restore him to his parents. The episode concludes with the statement that Deudoné's parents continue to observe Nicholas's feast every year for the rest of their lives. This fits in well with Wace's remark in the prologue that anyone who loves and serves a saint will deserve a good reward (vv. 31–32). There can be no doubt that for Wace Cethron and his wife Euphrosina represent his ideal of secular behaviour towards the Church. They pay due attention to matters relating to the Church and are willing to make use of their wealth to enhance it.

The motifs, clearly dear to Wace's heart, of honouring the clergy, celebrating saints' feast days, providing good readings and singing and recounting miracles also occur in Episodes 16, 3 and 15. For Wace, as Le Saux comments, 'due love and respect of the clergy is the best way of showing one's devotion to the saint' (p. 74). The miracle in which Nicholas revives a boy who has been strangled by the Devil (Episode 16, vv. 1157–376) highlights the parents' extreme respect for the clergy. Even though their son is dead, the parents do not sacrifice the pleasure of the clerics they are entertaining at their house. They realise that, given the news of the boy's death, the clerics would be dismayed and abandon their meal (vv. 1317–20).

Indeed, throughout this episode the parents show themselves to be worthy of both Nicholas's succour and Wace's admiration. On Nicholas's feast day each year, the father brings in clerics to sing and also makes sure that they are paid and fed well (vv. 1171–74). When the boy is resurrected, we are told that Nicholas is loved all the more and his feast day celebrated three times better than it had been in the past. Wace does not neglect this opportunity to state once more that on these occasions the parents' joy and gratitude spills over on to the clerics, who are well looked after and cherished all the more (vv. 1361–76). The role of clerics themselves in establishing the feast features in Episode 3, in which three clerics (the term 'clercs' in vv. 213 and 219 probably means 'students, scholars' rather than 'clergymen, priests') are murdered by an innkeeper (vv. 213–26). When Nicholas's prayers have restored their souls to their bodies, we read: 'Because he [Nicholas] honoured the clerics in this way, / They hold a feast on his day, / With good lessons and good singing, / And accounts of miracles' (vv. 223–26). In the complementary Episode 15, in which the innkeeper murders the merchant who is on his way to make an offering in Nicholas's church, Wace brings his tale to a conclusion by stating that both victim and killer pay their respects to Nicholas and beg forgiveness. He seems to be saying here that the saint's posthumous interventions in human life can not only correct injustices and convert sinners but also benefit the church financially. The 'grant aveir' (v. 1099) that the merchant was carrying for his 'offrande' in church (v. 1096) would have been lost but for Nicholas, and no doubt the repenting sinner ('pecchere', v. 1135) would make his own financial contribution when he reached Nicholas's shrine. In Wace's ideal world the clergy, on the one hand, perform their duties to perfection (when Nicholas dies, he tells us that clerics had gathered from all over the region, vv. 613–14) and, on the other hand, the laity, especially its wealthy members, respond accordingly, thus permitting the clergy to maintain their way of life.

Wace uses the themes of children and wealth, of compassion and justice, and of lay-clerical relations to convey clear teachings about when and how to call on Nicholas and how to deserve his aid. The work as a whole offers not only examples of the precepts articulated in the prologue, but also opportunities for the audience to practice their devotion to the saint by sharing his compassion for the unfortunate and for sinners, by having faith in the justice of the saint's actions, and indeed, by listening respectfully to the words of the cleric Wace. If they are inspired by the example of the diverse protagonists, they may well also make material offerings to the church in honour of St Nicholas.

Style

The considerable stylistic merits of the *Nicholas* have led critics to see the text as the last of Wace's hagiographical works (Ronsjö, pp. 20, 25–26; Francis, pp. xvi–xvii; Arnold, ed. *Brut*, p. lxxvi, cited in Ronsjö, p. 20; Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, p. 52). Ronsjö's analysis posits a direct relationship between the frequency of rhetorical devices and Wace's maturity as a poet. Thus, for example, the apostrophes of the *Nicholas* are more frequent and more varied than in the *Conception*, while the *Margaret* has by far the fewest (pp. 21, 24–25). If we follow this logic, however, the stylistic evidence could suggest that Wace wrote the *Nicholas* even later in his career, in the 1150s or even the 1160s: of all his works the *Nicholas* contains the highest frequency of synonymous terms (Ronsjö, p. 23, note 2) and the highest frequency of broken couplets (p. 69; see discussion below). While far from conclusive, Ronsjö's analysis highlights uncertainties in dating Wace's hagiographical texts and calls into question the assumption that they are the mere juvenilia of an author who would go on to become a skilled writer of secular history.

The stylistic trait that marks the clearest difference between the other hagiographical works and the *Nicholas* is the development of a distinct authorial voice. As Laurent remarks, already in the prologue of the *Nicholas* Wace forcefully asserts 'I am Norman and my name is Wace' (v. 35), in contrast to the *Margaret* and the *Conception*, in which all that identifies the author are third-person references to his name in an epilogue (*Margaret*, v. 742; Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, p. 52), in a prologue and in a transitional passage (*Conception*, vv. 2, 1111). Ronsjö notes that this noticeably personal tone carries into the rest of the work with the frequent use of apostrophes and commentary (pp. 25–26). The voice that Wace creates, especially near the beginning, is authoritative. His assertion that clerics must show the 'lei' to those who cannot read Latin (vv. 1–3) invokes both his own authority as an educated man and the sovereign authority of dogma (Laurent, p. 184). As Uitti has shown, the clerkly narrator plays the role of officiant in the ritual celebration of the saint, which occurs each time the text is read ('The Clerkly Narrator Figure', p. 396). In order to convey this authority, the hagiographer must articulate the qualities that distinguish him from his audience, most notably for Wace the distinction between devoting or not devoting one's mind to 'lectres' (either to learning in general or to Latin in particular, vv. 1–2). A number of critics have commented on the extent to which Wace differentiates his authorial persona from the listeners or, more generally, clerics from laypeople. For Laurent, the

prologue insists on clerics' superiority that not only derives from their greater knowledge but, indeed, is as natural to clerics as noble status is to the nobility (p. 185). Le Saux agrees that there exists a 'sharp distinction between laity and clerics' (p. 56) at the beginning of the work, but she argues that the narrative voice subtly shifts away from didactic authority and towards humble devotion to the saint, a sentiment that unites the narrator and the audience. A closer look at the prologue, however, shows that, even as he differentiates between 'clerc' and 'lai' at the start, Wace emphasises the communal nature of their efforts.

Even in the first thirty-four lines of the prologue, as Gerald F. Carr has demonstrated in 'The Prologue to Wace's *Vie de saint Nicholas*', Wace structurally disrupts the opposition of 'clerc' and 'lai' by creating a 'concentric pattern' using anaphora and repetition with antithesis. Further repetitions of words and syntax contribute to the strong unity of the passage (p. 6) rather than highlighting distinctions. Expanding on Carr's conclusions, we can see that the stylistic elements bring emphasis to the word 'chescon' and to the range of individuals and their devotional practices, with particular stress on the social diversity of the implied audience—knights, burgesses, peasants and courtiers—who appear in the central lines of the passage (vv. 17–18). The sense of unity and common purpose that Wace shares with his wide-ranging public is manifested from the outset. Not only clerics, but all members of society, whether they are wise or foolish, rich or poor (vv. 10–12), have a full range of duties. They must teach and inform, make use of any 'bonté' (vv. 15, 28) bestowed on them by God, trust in God, honour God with their whole being ('substance', v. 20), listen when told about God, be as helpful as possible to others, bear heavy burdens if they are able, display their knowledge, goodness and power, give generously and serve God and his saints (vv. 1–30). Indeed, the prologue is largely taken up with a litany of duties, the verb *deveir* being used eight times in the first 27 lines (vv. 3, 15, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27). Even within the activity of composing, reading and hearing the work, as Uitti remarks, each member plays a different role that contributes to the full poetic and devotional experience (p. 400). The *Nicholas* is apparently Wace's way of discharging his own responsibilities as a 'lectré' (v. 9). Despite the differences, all these duties can be summed up as a way of loving God, and everyone who does so will be well rewarded (vv. 31–33).

Wace's nuanced use of rhetorical techniques in this poem further conveys his respect for his audience and a shared commitment to poetry (cf. *Margaret*, pp. 177, 184–86). As Carr's analysis indicates, forms of repetition play a significant role in the *Nicholas*'s rhetorical palette. Indeed,

Ronsjö and F. M. Warren identify repetition as Wace's chief stylistic technique within his *œuvre* more generally. In analysis of the *Brut* Warren goes so far as to claim that Wace 'founded a school of expression' through his experimentations with the various uses of direct repetition ('Some Features of Style', p. 517).[44] Revealingly, Laurent labels Wace's use of repetitive strategies 'une esthétique de l'emphase' ('an aesthetics of emphasis', p. 362): although repetition is an indispensable technique for teaching, it is also an essential component of the poetic beauty of Wace's works. As Laurent shows in her readings of several lamentations, the pathos of the scenes of parental sorrow derives in large part from Wace's use of direct repetition, anaphora or other forms of syntactic repetition, analepsis (a form of flashback in which earlier events are related after later events) and alliteration (pp. 351–52, 361–63). In Episode 17, for example, when the mother laments over her strangled son, she not only analeptically retells the premonitory dream that she already recounted near the start of the story, but she also evokes twice in five lines the image of the wolf nursing at her breast and drinking her blood (vv. 1271–1278; Laurent, p. 362). The reiterations stress both the horror of her loss and her inability to move beyond it. Although this horror and stagnancy could easily become the object of moralising lessons on the dangers of worldly attachments, Wace instead expands the lamentation to present a touching portrait of a bereaved mother. The depth of her sorrow—and the grief of the child's father, too—show the parents' real need for Nicholas's help rather than their sinful worldliness; Nicholas's aid then becomes understandable as a compassionate response.

Another technique of repetition that Wace frequently uses to stop or slow the forward movement of the narrative, in order to emphasise an important scene or idea, is the use of a repeated rhyme continuing across two or more couplets. Warren calls these monorhymed couplets 'tirades lyriques' (p. 655), while Grossel refers to them as 'quatrains' (p. 202ff.), although they sometimes extend for more than two couplets. Grossel counts seventeen each in the *Conception* and the *Nicholas* (p. 213). Warren notes that in the *Brut*, in addition to the continuation of exact rhymes, Wace uses near-rhymes in succeeding couplets (such as *–é* / *-ié* / *-é*; p. 658), which evokes the type of repetitive rhyme characteristic of epic *laisses*;

[44] Stefano M. Cingolani studies repetition as a fundamental characteristic of twelfth-century poetics more generally and believes that Wace's use is merely accidental ('Wace agiografo', pp. 123, 129–30).

these near-rhymes occur in the *Nicholas* as well, for example at vv. 1081–84 (*-ee* / *-é*). Wace also plays with assonance and with alternating rhymes or assonances over quite lengthy passages. One instance occurs in Episode 12, when the pagan learns of the Nicholas statue's powers: the lines end in *-as* / *-ifs-eïz* / *-at* (two couplets) *-ist* / *-at* (vv. 669–80). The alternating rhymes allow the action to move forward, but the echoes suggest a close connection among the Christian's faith in Nicholas, Nicholas's power, the pagan's incipient faith and, somewhat surprisingly, the pagan's quotidian activities of changing money and travelling about. The presence of these latter actions in the sequence gives them greater value, and, as with the grief of the strangled boy's parents, it suggests sympathy for the concerns of lay people. Overall, it is extremely difficult in the *Nicholas* to categorise the rhetorical strategies discussed above as either aesthetic or didactic: Wace melds the two purposes so fully that poetic devices entertain and teach simultaneously.

Against the background of these various forms of repetition Wace deploys disruptive strategies, namely, broken couplets and enjambment, direct discourse, apostrophe and rhetorical questions, to maintain the audience's interest by shifting the rhythm or the type of discourse. Ronsjö's careful study of the couplets in the *Nicholas* corrects Paul Meyer's assertion that the work represents the primitive articulation of this poetic form (pp. 66–69). Although Ronsjö (p. 69) still concludes that Wace is rather conservative in the numbers of couplets he breaks (in comparison, for example, with Chrétien de Troyes), he shows that throughout the *Nicholas* Wace makes use of a wide variety of ways to split couplets, involving both sentence breaks and enjambment. A number of the examples provided by Ronsjö coincidentally highlight Wace's nuanced use of rhythm and rhyme: the citations indicate that the author not infrequently combines broken couplets with rhymes continuing for more than a couplet. Thus, at the beginning of the murdered merchant miracle (Episode 16), we learn that:

> Un marchëand s'aparillat
> D'aler al seint, en veie entrat
> Od grant aveir que il portat.
> A une nuit se herbergat. (vv. 1097–100)

The four lines form a quatrain on the *-at* rhyme, and Wace further links the first three with enjambments, such that the passage presents a unit that continues beyond the typical couplet. As a unit, however, the quatrain also disrupts the flow of couplets that precede and follow it, and the enjambments further alter the rhythm.[45]

Just as these variations in the rhythm interrupt what could otherwise be a monotonous flow of couplets, the shifts in level of discourse break up the third-person narration. Le Saux notes that the miracles with abundant direct discourse alternate with others that lack speech and that the miracles of the posthumous section include more dialogue, perhaps as a technique for retaining the audience's attention in the latter part of the Life (*Companion*, p. 67). Wace also directly addresses his audience on multiple occasions, drawing them into the work. As Ronsjö remarks, there are considerably more cases of apostrophe in the *Nicholas* than in the other religious works, most frequently in the forms of 'es vos' and 'oëz' or 'oëz, seignurs' (pp. 24–25). 'Es vos' primarily serves to highlight the arrival of a major actor in a story: Nicholas, two miraculously restored children, the cart that will kill the perjuring Christian and the Jew who will call for his resurrection. The one exception introduces the lamentations of the drowned boy's parents in the goblet miracle and, as we have seen, contributes to turning the audience into witnesses of the event (v. 851). As in the *Margaret* (vv. 563, 571; see above), Wace uses pairs of 'es vos' in fairly close proximity to emphasise two especially dramatic scenes: the resurrections of the perjurer (vv. 779, 795) and of the strangled boy (vv. 1326, 1350). Beginning near the start of the work, the calls to 'Hear!' similarly engage the audience. Before recounting Nicholas's first good deed, Wace addresses the audience directly in order to emphasise Nicholas's piety: 'Oëz cum seintement le fist' (v. 96). In vv. 490 ('Oëz cum ceo fu et coment!'), 1254 ('Oëz quel dol en fist la mere') and 1485 ('Oëz que nus trovom lisant') he uses the same technique in order to involve the audience in the narrative (cf. also v. 753: 'Ore entendez del cristïen!').

On several occasions Wace reminds his audience of the duties of telling and listening that he set out in the prologue. The first words of the tale of the famine in Nicholas's land (Episode 7) link his audience's obligation to listen to what he is saying to his own ability to tell a good story: 'Oëz, sei-

[45] Cf. Laurent's discussion of the poetic effects of repetitions and enjambment in the lament of the strangled boy's father (p. 363).

gnurs, ben fait a dire' (v. 275). Similarly, at the conclusion of the tale of the Christian who borrows money from a Jew, the address to the public calls attention to what they will learn ('apernez', v. 807) if they pay heed to what Wace has told them (vv. 807–12). This apostrophe is immediately followed by a rhetorical question to the audience by way of introduction to a new tale, that of the substituted goblet (Episode 14): 'Savez que seint Nicholas fist?' (v. 813), a phrase Wace later repeats before he tells us that Nicholas rubs oil from his lamp on to a crippled man (v. 1509). Further questions ask the audience to contemplate Nicholas's charity and humility (vv. 199–200) and draw attention to Wace's conscientiousness in expressing himself concisely (v. 819). Although many of the apostrophes take the form of imperatives, they are frequently exclamatory rather than directive—'Hear what grief the mother displayed' (v. 1254)—and, together with the rhetorical questions, invite rather than command the audience to engage with the narrative. The narrator's authority seems to derive as much from his ability to tell an engaging story as from his position as cleric.

Like the *Margaret*, the *Nicholas* testifies to the development of vernacular hagiography as a fusion of clerical and secular literary and moral values. The 'romanz' that Wace uses is not merely the vernacular used in France: it is a language used to recount dramatic narratives. Wace clearly identifies and demonstrates his authority, but he equally reveals the audience's authority as moral people who also recognise and expect skilfully written works. Wace's sensitivity to his audience's needs, evident in his stylistic choices, shows the degree to which he (via his narrator) and his audience form a community through their enjoyment of the work and their active response to Nicholas's story.

Conclusion

An elegantly crafted Life of one of Christianity's most popular saints, the *Life of St Nicholas* deserves attentive study for what it can reveal about the saint's developing cult, the subtleties of hagiographic composition in the mid-twelfth century and Wace's influence in both of these realms.

Wace's version of Nicholas's life and works is faithful to, and even enhances, the traditional representation of the saint as a thaumaturge or miracle worker. Rather than biographical details or inner thought processes, it is miracles and good works ('Les granz miracles et les bens', v. 197) that comprise the essential information about the saint's life. The lack of insight into Nicholas's thinking might lead readers to see him as

almost inhumanly holy, a spirit fully and ineffably in harmony with God's will and a body that merely serves as a tool to work God's miracles. The differences between the Mombritius version of the miracle of the three counts (Episode 9) and Wace's version highlight this extreme holiness in the latter. As Le Saux notes (*Companion*, pp. 69–70), Wace erases the sparring between Constantine and Nicholas that shows the saint in the Latin *Vita* as a terrestrial bishop with normal political concerns. Instead, Wace emphasises the miraculous element and the saint's ability to reverse injustice. The broad range of beneficiaries of Nicholas's good works—across class, religion, age, time and space—further contributes to this sense of awe-inspiring sanctity. Nicholas is able effortlessly to help everyone who loves him, no matter how impossible the situation. On the surface Wace's Nicholas thus lacks the qualities that would particularise him as a human being. Unlike Eulalia he does not engage in one combat that proves his faith; unlike Leger he does not participate in the politics of his time; unlike Alexis or the Virgin Mary he has no recognisable family; unlike Margaret he does not communicate his hopes or struggles in prayers to God.

Nonetheless, even though Wace eschews many of the typical techniques for conveying a saint's character, his choice of stories and style of narration convey a clear idea of Nicholas as a compassionate and just man. In particular, Wace emphasises the saint's concern for problems relating to children and to material wealth. It seems likely that Wace drew on more than one source and that he added to the more commonly disseminated tradition miracles that focus on these two themes. The themes in themselves convey a very worldly perspective—they are exactly the two aspects of secular life from which St Alexis flees—but even more, the way in which Wace recounts the miracles suggests the real value that both children and wealth have for Nicholas. Unlike the *Alexis* or the *Eulalia*, where love of things and bodies only leads to pain and joy is deferred until after death, the *Nicholas* optimistically presents the rescue of wealth and bodies as necessary for the happy ending of the stories. In fact, just as the *Margaret* highlights the utility of the body in achieving salvation, the stories concerning Nicholas teach that children and possessions have value, although significantly, not the value that the protagonists recognised initially. This choice of focus provides the human side that, along with his saintly efficacy, makes Nicholas attractive as an intercessor on behalf of the audience; he seems to share their worldly concerns and is capable of performing miracles to protect those interests. If Wace did enhance these aspects of Nicholas's character, which are already present in the tradition but not necessarily with a clear focus, it is possible that

his version of the saint's biography contributed to promoting Nicholas as a patron saint of children and of merchants, just as it is possible that his *Margaret* may have helped to cement the connection between that saint and women in labour. As with the *Margaret* and the *Conception*, the manuscript tradition of the *Nicholas* indicates broad popularity, which suggests significant influence.

These thematic choices, together with Wace's treatment of the subjects, reflect not only a respect for a secular audience's values, but also a shared appreciation of the potential value of worldly literary pleasures. Crimes against innocent children or involving great wealth provide dramatic material for narratives. The particular ways in which Wace exploits the potential of these dramatic conflicts creates a participatory experience that allows the audience to imitate Nicholas by practising his virtues of compassion and justice even as they listen to the stories. As in the *Conception*, Wace engages both his audience's reason (for example, to appraise the logic of justice in the goblet miracle; Episode 14) and their emotions (fear and compassion in the same miracle and in the boiled infant miracle; Episode 3) in order to prompt them to show their faith. Just as extreme attachment to one's child or to one's possessions can provide the opportunity for a display of love for, and faith in, the saint, full engagement in the pleasure of stories about the deeds of Nicholas allows the audience to understand the unspoken logic of the saint, to imagine his feelings and to share both those feelings and the consequent desire to do good works, based on that emotional response. In one sense Wace's *Nicholas* functions in a similar way to the earliest *Alexis*. Just as we know nothing of Nicholas's thoughts, we know little of Alexis's feelings and, for the story to make sense, must deduce the extent of his emotional suffering. However, Alexis's thoughts, though they may be accessible, are too extreme to serve as simple models: the reader or listener who attempts to see the world as Alexis does (like Peter Waldo, founder of the Waldensians) risks becoming a heretic. Nicholas's compassion carries no such danger. If the audience shares his response to the various situations, they are practising a perfectly acceptable virtue. Wace's project is far more collaborative than that of the anonymous *Alexis* poet, and while clerics and laypeople, in his eyes, have somewhat different duties, they all contribute actively to the veneration of the saint through good works.

These good works are the ultimate purpose of the Wace's poem, and even if he recounts miracles, which of course are the essence of this version as of all earlier versions, he does so in the same practical spirit that critics have recognised as being present in the author's other works. Their

function is to inspire very quotidian deeds, such as saying prayers or giving charitably. Certain realistic details, e.g. the movement of boiling water or of a stormy sea, reinforce this straightforward tone, counterbalancing the wondrous events. Another characteristic trait, the desire to seek out and provide full information about his subject, is apparent in the number of miracles Wace seems to have brought together. While it is possible that he worked from an as-yet unidentified single Latin manuscript, the lack of evidence for at least two of the miracles and the rareness of others indicate that Wace himself was responsible for assembling the group found in his version of the Life. As in all of the other works attributed to Wace, the author conveys a keen desire to educate his audience as truthfully and completely as possible. His assertion that 'we do not find them [all Nicholas's miracles] written down / And have not heard them all' (vv. 1555–56) in no way undermines this sense of completeness. Wace implies that his version contains all the miracles he could find and that even if he could not include every miracle the saint performed, the range of stories still provides a broadly representative image of the saint.

Wace's *Life of St Nicholas* often appears as a passing reference in studies of Nicholas or of Wace, as one of the oldest vernacular narratives about the saint or as the most polished of the Norman author's 'minor' works, but it merits deeper consideration. If it did influence the trajectory of Nicholas's cult, then this impact reveals a more dynamic interaction between clerical hagiographers and lay audiences and a more interdependent relationship between Latin and vernacular saints' Lives than is often assumed. Within the history of Wace's development as an author, the *St Nicholas* may also challenge long-held beliefs. The authority with which Wace announces in the prologue both his name and his status as a Norman (v. 35), together with the skilful composition of his text, invites a reassessment of the place of this poem in Wace's *œuvre*. For it bears the marks of a mature author. Chronologically, it would also make more sense as the work of later years, but more research is required for such a claim to be made. It is certainly more common for worldly authors to do penance by writing saints' Lives—for example, Denis Piramus and his *Life of St Edmund* (vv. 1–24)—than for hagiographers to turn to accounts of temporal deeds and concerns. Even if Wace composed the *Nicholas* before the *Brut* and the *Rou*, its literary qualities are certainly comparable to these better known works. By reading the *Nicholas* beside the secular histories, we may gain new insight into the mechanisms of the longer works. Far from being a 'minor' piece, the *Life of St Nicholas* may well have played a key role not only in shaping Nicholas's legend and Wace's methods and

style as an historian, but also, more broadly, in determining the way vernacular history, both secular and religious, would forge literary, political and spiritual communities.

De Sancto Nicholao

A ces qui n'unt lectres aprises fol. 117vb
Ne lur ententes n'i ont mises,
Deivent li clerc mustrer la lei,
Parler des seinz, dire pur quei
Chescone feste est controvee,
Chesconë a sun jur gardee.
Chescon ne poet pas tut saver
Ne tut oïr ne tut veer.
Li un sunt lai, li un lectré,
Li un fol et li un senee,
Li un petit et li un grant,
Li un povre, li un manant.
Si done Deus deversement
Divers dons a diverse gent.
Chescon deit mustrer sa bonté
De ceo que Deus lui ad doné.
Li chivaler et li burgeis
Et li vilein et li corteis
Deivent en Deu aver fiance
Et honurer de lur substance.
Bonement deivent esculter
Quant il oient de Deu parler.
Qui mels set mels deit enseigner
Et qui plus poet plus deit aider.
Qui plus est fort plus deit porter
Et qui plus ad plus deit doner.
Chescon deit mustrer son saver
Et sa bonté et son poer fol. 118ra
Et Deu servir, son creatur,
Et as barons sainz pur s'amur.*
Qui ben l'aimë et ben le sert
Bon gueredon de lui desert.
Petit prendra qui sert petit,
Si cum l'escriture le dit.
Jo sui Normanz s'ai a non Guace.
Dit m'est et rové que jo face
De seint Nicholas en romanz,
Qui fist miracles bels et granz.
En romanz dirrai de sa vie
Et des miracles grant partie.
En romanz voil dire un petit
De ceo que nus le latin dit,
Que li lai le puissent aprendre,
Qui ne poënt latin entendre.
De Patras fu, d'une cité

To those who have received no schooling*
And never put their minds to study
Clerics must explain the faith,
Speak of the saints and say why
Each feast has been established,
And each one is observed on its own day.
Each person is restricted in his knowledge
And cannot hear everything or see everything.
Some are lay, some are lettered,
Some are fools and some wise,
Some small and some great,
Some poor, some rich.*
God gives in different fashion
Different gifts to different people.
Each must demonstrate his goodness
In accordance with what God has given him.
Knights and burgesses,
Peasants and courtiers,
Must have trust in God
And honour him with their whole being.*
They must listen eagerly
When they hear talk of God.
He who knows more must teach more,
And he who can do more must be of greater service.
He who is stronger must carry more,
And he who has more must give more.
Each must display his knowledge,
His goodness and his power,
And serve God, his Creator,
And the noble saints for love of him.
He who loves him well and serves him well
Deserves a good reward from him.
He will gain little who serves little,
As Holy Scripture states.*
I am a Norman and my name is Wace.
I have been told and requested to put
Into French the story of Saint Nicholas,*
Who performed fine and great miracles.
In French I shall tell of his life
And of a large portion of his miracles.
In French I intend to relate a little
Of what the Latin tells us,
So that laymen can learn of it,
Who cannot understand Latin.
Nicholas was from Patara, from a city*

Noble et riche d'antiquité,
Mes puis est la chose empeiree,
A ben proef tute amenusee.
Pere et mere out de grant haltesce,
De parenté et de richesce.
Asez ourent or et argent
Et mult viveient seintement
Et tel enfant voldrent aveir
Dunt peüssent fere lur eir,
Nïent sul de lur manantie
Mes de murs et de bone vie.
Tel fut cum il le desirerent,
Nicholas par non l'apelerent.
N'eurent enfant fors sul cestui,
Tant l'urent plus cher ambedui.
Uncor petit en berz giseit,
De sul la mamele viveit.
Si jeünout pur Deu amur
Ne leitout qu'une feiz le jur
Al mecresdi, al vendresdi.
Si l'out Deus de sa grace empli.
Petitet fut a lettres mis,
Par grant entente fut apris.
Quant plus crut et plus amenda,
Plus servi Deu et plus l'ama.
Ja ert bacheler tut formez,
De mainte bonté alosez.
Sis peres prist definement
Et sa mere tut ensement. fol. 118rb
De Nicholas firent lur eir,
De quanquë il purent aveir.
Et Nicholas tut departi,
Teres, maisons et fius vendi.
Si dona tut a povre gent;
Ne fist altre reservement.
Un povres hom iloc maneit
Qui jadis riche esté aveit
Mais en poverté iert venus:
De tels avom plusurz veüz
Qui de grant aveir qu'il aveient
En grant poverté descendeient.
Tels i ad qui de poverté
Resunt venuz en grant plenté.
Cist povres aveit treis puceles.
Treis sues filles asez beles.

Noble and rich since antiquity,
But later things deteriorated
And it has virtually shrunk to nothing.
He had a father and mother of great nobility,
Of good lineage and great wealth.
They had an abundance of gold and silver
And lived a very holy life;
They wanted to have a child such that
They could make him their heir,
Not merely of their wealth
But of their customs and their holy life.
He was just as they desired
And they gave him the name Nicholas.
They had no other child apart from this one,
So they both cherished him all the more.
Whilst still small, he would lie in his cradle,
With the breast his only source of life.
Yet for love of God he fasted,
Taking milk only once a day,
On Wednesdays and on Fridays.
Thus God had filled him with his grace.
As a small boy, he was sent to school*
And was taught with great devotion.
When he had grown bigger and made progress,
He served God more and loved him more.
He was soon a fully formed youth,
Famed for his many fine qualities.
His father came to his end,
And the same thing happened to his mother;
They made Nicholas their heir
To everything they possessed.
Nicholas shared everything out
And sold lands, houses and fiefs.
He gave everything to the poor;
And did not hold anything back.
A poor man lived there,
Who had formerly been rich,
But had been reduced to poverty.
We have seen many such people
Who, from the great wealth they had,
Have descended into great poverty.
There are those who from poverty
Have returned to great abundance.*
This poor man had three maidens,
Three very beautiful daughters.

Entre els quatre n'urent que prendre
Ne qu'engager ne que despendre.
De vivre conseil ne trovouent
S'a gaëlise nen alouent.
Seint Nicholas pitez en prist;
Oëz cum seintement le fist:
Treiz nuiz a lur ostel alat,
Treiz riches dons d'or lur donat.
Le primerain lur ad doné
Pur relever de poverté,
Le second lur ad fait trover
Pur les treis filles marier,
La terce feiz lur ad doné
El non de Seinte Trinité.
Par la fenestre lur getout
Devant le lit, puis s'en alout.
A la terce nuit cil le prist
Qui l'out guaité si lui enquist
Qu'il ert, dunt fu, cum aveit non
Qui doné li out si grant don.
Cil lui dit: 'Jo sui Nicholas.
Va t'en, ja mar en parleras!
Mes loë Deu, ton creatur,
Et tes filles done a seignur.'
Seint Nicholas s'en veit a tant,
Li hom remist lé et joiant.
Retorné fut de poverté
Et ses filles de puteé.
De l'aveir furent marieez fol. 118va
Et ben richement conreéez.
Quant seint Nicholas out doné
Quanquë il out pur amur Dé,
Dreit a Mirre son chemin tint.
Quant il en la cité parvint,
Tut li evesque del regné
Esteient iloc asemblé,
Car l'erceveske mort esteit
Qui cel honur eü aveit.
Iloc erent si eliseient
A qui l'ercevescé dureient.
Ne la saveient qui doner,
Ne s'en poeient acorder.
Cist otriout, cist ne voleit,
Cist graantout, cist dediseit.
Un seinz eveskes i aveit

Between the four of them they had nothing left,
Neither to pawn nor to spend.
They did not know where to turn for food,
Unless the daughters resorted to prostitution.*
Saint Nicholas took pity on them;
Hear how he acted in saintly fashion:
For three nights he went to their lodging
And gave them three splendid gifts of gold.
The first one he gave them was
To relieve their poverty,
The second he gave them so that
The three daughters could be married,
And on the third occasion he gave them the gift
In the name of the Holy Trinity.
He threw the gifts through the window
In front of their beds and then departed.
On the third night he was caught by the man
Who had been lying in wait for him, and he asked him
Who he was, where he was from and what his name was,
He who had given him such a great gift.
He replied to him: 'I am Nicholas.
Go! You will regret it you ever speak of this!
But praise God, your Creator,
And bestow husbands on your daughters.'
Then Saint Nicholas departed
And the man stayed there, joyful and happy.
He had been rescued from poverty
And his daughters from prostitution.
With the money they were married off
And very richly provided for.*
When Saint Nicholas had given
Whatever he had, for the love of God,
He made his way straight to Myra.
When he reached that city,
All the bishops of the realm
Were assembled there,
For the archbishop had died
Who had held that office.*
They were there to determine
To whom they would give the archbishopric.
They did not know to whom they should give it
And could not agree on the matter.
One of them offered it, another refused,
One of them granted it, another objected.
A holy bishop was there

Qui le mester faire deveit.
Cist comandat grans ureisonz
A faire od granz afflictions
Que Deus apertement mustrast
A qui cel evesqué donast;
Demustrast par sa pïeté
Qui dignes fust de l'evesché.
Un seinz angles del ciel li dist
Que par matin celui preïst
Qui primers al muster veneit:
Ceo iert cil que Deus eslireit.
'A la porte', dit il, 'serras,
Le premerain entrant prendras
Qui ert apelé Nicholas.
Iceste evesché lui dorras.'
Li arcevesques si le vit
Come li angles lui out dit.
Nicholas par matin trova,
Anel et croce lui dona.
Unques n'i out nul contredit
Qui fust de grant ne de petit.
L'ostesce u il aveit jeü,
U il le seir herbergé fu,
Oït que il iert ordeniez
Et en cel evesqué posez.
De la joie que ele oï
Son enfant enz al bain guerpi
Que desur le feu fet aveit;
En un vessel de terre esteit.
De tere a cel tens feseit l'om
Un tel veissel; *pan* aveit non.
Si fu la mere tresmusee fol. 118vb
Et de la joie trespensee,
Son enfant sur le feu lessa.
Le feu enprist, l'ewe enchalfa.
Apres comença a boillir,
A esmoveir et a fremir,
Et li enfez qui dedenz feu,
Qui out le cors tendrë et nu,
En l'ewe boillant se seeit,
As boillons jueit sis perneit.
Unques en cele ewe boillant
Ne senti de mal tant ne quant.
Puis que la messe fu finee
Si s'est la mere purpensee

Who was responsible for the appointment.
He ordered great prayers
To be said, along with great penance,
So that God would show them clearly
To whom he should give this bishopric.
He should reveal to them in his piety
Who was worthy of the bishopric.
A holy angel from heaven told him
That the next morning he should take the man
Who was the first to come to the church;
He would be the man whom God would choose.
'You will be at the door', he said,
'And will take the first man to enter,
Whose name will be Nicholas.
You will give this bishopric to him.'
And the archbishop saw it come to pass
Just as the angel had told him.
In the morning he found Nicholas
And gave him the ring and the crosier.
There was no opposition
From anyone, great or small.
The hostess where Nicholas had slept,
Where he had lodged for the night,
Heard that he was to be ordained
And established in this bishopric.
Because of her joy when she heard this news,
She abandoned her child in the bath
That she had made on the fire;
He was in an earthen vessel.
From earth at that time were made
Such vessels; they were called 'pans'.*
The mother was so absorbed
And transfixed in her joy
That she left her child on the fire.
The fire took hold, the water got hot,
Then it began to boil,
To stir and to quiver,
And the child who was in it,
Whose body was tender and bare,
Was sitting in the boiling water,
Playing with the bubbles and taking hold of them.
Never, while in this boiling water,
Did he experience any pain whatsoever.
When the mass was over,
The woman realised

Que ele out lessé son enfant
Einz al bain sur le feu ardant.
Dunt s'en vint a l'ostel corant
Son fiz par son non recriant.
Quant fu en son ostel entree
Come femme tute desvee,
Son enfant trova tut heité
En l'ewe boillant sein et lé.
Dunt prist l'enfant si l'aportat,
A tut le pople le contat.
Le miracle que lui avint
La gent a merveille le tint.
Si en crut tost grant renomee
Seint Nicholas par la contree.
Gref me serreit a reconter
Et gref a vus a esculter
Les granz miracles et les bens
Qu'il fist a plusurs cristiens.
Que quideus de sa charité
Et de sa grant humilité?
Chastes esteit et almonerz
Et a tuz leals conseillers.
La nuit veillout en ureisons,
En jeunes, en afflictions.
Une femme un enfant aveit
Que de diable plein esteit.
Ses draz rompeit, ses meins manjout.
Sa vie en grant dolur usout.
Tut depesçout ses vestemenz
Et od ses meinz et od ses denz.
Quant seint Nicholas le seigna,
Del diable le delivra.
Treis clercs alouent a escole. fol. 119ra
– N'en ferai mie grant parole. –
Li ostes par nuit les occist,
Les cors musçat, l'aver en prist.
Seint Nicholas par Deu le sout,
Sempres fu la si cum Deu plout.
Les clercs a l'oste demandat,
Nes pout celer si les mustrat.
Seint Nicholas par sa preere
Mist les almes el cors arere.
Pur ceo qu'as clercs fit cel honur
Funt li clers la feste a son jur
De ben lirë et ben chanter

That she had left her child
In the bath on the burning fire.
Then she went running to the lodging,
Shouting out her son's name.
When she went into her lodging,
Like a demented woman,
She found her child perfectly happy,
Safe and sound in the boiling water.
Then she took the child and carried him away;
She told everyone the story.
The miracle that had befallen her
Astonished everyone.
From it Saint Nicholas soon acquired
Great fame throughout the region.*
It would be difficult for me to relate,
And difficult for you to listen to,
The great miracles and the good deeds
That he performed for many Christians.
What do you think of his compassion
And his great humility?
He was chaste and charitable,
And a loyal counsellor for all.
He spent his nights in prayer,
In fasting and in penance.
A woman had a child
Who was filled with the devil.
He rent his clothes, gnawed his hands
And passed his life in great sorrow.
He tore at his clothing
With his hands and his teeth.*
When Saint Nicholas blessed him,
He freed him from the devil.
Three clerics were pursuing their studies
—I shall not speak about this for long—
And one night their host killed them;
He hid their bodies and took their money.
Saint Nicholas found out about this through God
And went there immediately, just as it pleased God.
He asked the host for the clerics;
Unable to conceal them, he showed them to him.
Saint Nicholas through his prayers
Restored their souls to their bodies.
Because he honoured clerics in this way,
They hold a feast on his day
With good lessons and good singing,

Et des miracles reciter.
Seignurs, vus qui alez par mer,
De cest baron oëz parler
Qui par tut est tant socurable
Et qui en mer est tant aidable.
Mariner par la mer passouent,
D'une terë en altre alouent.
Ja esteient en halte mer,
Aseür quidouent aler.
Et la mer comence a emfler
Et a creistrë et a meller.
Grant vent vint et espesse pluie
Que as mariners mult ennuie.
Granz fu li venz et li orages,
Esbaï fu tut li plus sagez.
Si plaissa la tormente tuz
Ne valeit guerez li plus pruz.
Rompent cordes, depecent tref,
Fruissent keviles de la nef.
Dunt comencent tuz a crier,
Deu et ses seinz a reclamer.
Mult se cleiment cheistif et las,
Sovent dïent: 'Seint Nicholas,
Socur nus, seint Nicholas, sire,
Si tels es cum nus oüm dire'.
A tant un hom lur aparut
Qui od els en la nef estut.
Si ad itant od els parlé:
'Jeo sui, que m'avez apelé'.
Ignele pas l'orez cessat,
Et seint Nicholas s'en alat.
A port vindrent li notiner,
Tut sein, tut lé vunt al muster.
Ignelment al muster corurent, fol. 119rb
Seint Nicholas iloc coneurent
Senz ceo que mustré ne lur fu.
Si ne l'ourent enceis veü
Fors en la nef u aparut
Quant al peril les socurut.
A la terre a ses pez se mistrent,
Plurant et merciant li distrent
Comfeitement par sa pité
Lur aveit en le mer aidé.
Seint Nicholas lur respondi:
'Nïent jo mes Deus vus guarri.

And accounts of miracles.*
My lords, you who sail over the seas,
Hear the story of this good man
Who is everywhere so full of succour
And so helpful to those at sea.
Sailors were crossing the sea,
Going from one land to another.
They were already on the high seas
And thought they were travelling in safety.
But the sea began to swell,
To rise and to become stormy.
A gale arose and heavy rain,
Which greatly troubled the sailors.
The wind and the storm were great
And the wisest of them was afraid.
The storm overwhelmed them all so much that
The bravest of them was worth next to nothing.
The ropes broke, the sails were torn to shreds
And the pegs in the ship were broken.
Then they all began to cry out
And to call upon God and his saints.
They proclaimed themselves very sad and miserable,
Saying repeatedly: 'Saint Nicholas,
Help us, Saint Nicholas, lord,
If you are such as we hear tell'.
Then a man appeared to them
Who stood with them on the ship.
Then he spoke to them:
'I am here because you have summoned me'.
Swiftly the storm ceased
And Saint Nicholas departed.
The sailors reached harbour safe and sound
And they all went to church filled with joy.
They ran swiftly to the church
And recognised Saint Nicholas there,
Without having him pointed out to them.
Yet they had never seen him before,
Except on the ship where he had appeared
When he helped them in their time of danger.
They prostrated themselves at his feet;
Crying and thanking him, they told him
How in his compassion
He had helped them at sea.
Saint Nicholas replied to them:
'It was not I but God who saved you.

Graces en rendez Jesu Crist,
Que ceo que recontez vus fist.'
Itels miracles et greinnurz
Ad fait seint Nicholas plusurz.
Oëz, seignurs, ben fait a dire:
Un tens fut d'une grant famine
Que gent n'aveient que manger
Ne s'en saveient conseiller.
Al tens de la greinnur cherté,
Quant greinnur vente esteit de blé,
Out seint Nicholas un message
Que pres d'iloc a un rivage
Aveit plusurs niefs ariveez
De blé et de forment combleez.
Seint Nicholas al port ala,
As mariners des niefs parla.
'Seignurs', fist il, 'jo vus requer,
Si sui venu a vus preer
Que del forment que vus portez
En cest païs nus en partez,
Car de blé sumez soffreituz,
Mult en i ad des bosonniuz'.
'Sire', distrent cil, 'ne poüm,
Car a mesure le portom.
Par mesure fu receü,
Ensement deit estre rendu.
D'Alisandre portum cest blé
Par mesure pris et livré.
Ces a qui le devom livrer
Le voldrunt tut remesurer.
Li formenz est nostre seignur,
Constantin, nostre empereur.'
Seint Nicholas lur respondi:
'De cest païs aëz merci
Que vus veez a mort turnee fol. 119va
Si socurz n'a de vostre blé.
De chescone des niefs qu'avez
Sul cent mesures nus donez.
Par tel covent le recevrai,
Al non de Crist qui servi ai,
Que ja meinz n'en i troverez
Quant vus al mesurer vendrez.'
Livré lui unt par tel covent
Tant cum il requert de forment.
Apres s'en vunt en lur païz,

Give thanks to Jesus Christ,
Who did for you what you are recounting.'
Such miracles and greater ones
Did Saint Nicholas perform in large numbers.
Hear, my lords, it is right to tell this:
There was once a time of great famine*
When people had nothing to eat
And did not know where to turn.
At the time of the highest prices,
When sales of grain were at their peak,
Saint Nicholas received a message
That on a nearby shore
A number of ships had arrived,
Laden with grain and wheat.
Saint Nicholas went to the port
And spoke to the sailors on the ships.
'My lords', he said, 'I beg you,
And have come to ask you,
That some of the wheat you are carrying
Should be shared with us in this country,
For we have a shortage of grain
And there are many needy people.'
'My lord', they said, 'we cannot do so,
For we are carrying it by measure.
By measure it was received
And likewise it must be handed over.
From Alexandria we are carrying this grain,
Which was taken and given to us by measure.
Those to whom we have to deliver it
Will want to measure it all again.
The wheat belongs to our lord,
Constantine, our emperor.'*
Saint Nicholas replied to them:
'Have mercy on this country,
Which you see is facing death
Unless it has succour from your grain.
From each of the ships you have
Give us just a hundred measures.
I shall receive it with this promise,
That in the name of Christ whom I have served
You will not find any less
When you come to measure it out.'
They handed over to him with such a promise
As much wheat as he sought.
Afterwards they went to their country

Le forment livrent as bailliz.
Totes les mesures senz faille
Unt rendu par conte et par taille.
Unques mesure n'en failli,
Ben fut creü, la Deu merci.
A la mesure l'unt rendu
Que primes l'eurent receü,
Et puis umt as bailliz conté
Cumben urent del blé doné
Et coment il l'unt retrové.
Tus en loërent Dampnedeu.
A Dampnedeu graces rendirent
E del seint baron grant los firent.
Quant seint Nicholas fu remes
Od le forment qu'il out des nes,
Sil departi et devisat,
Et Deus si le multipliat,
Tut l'an en eurent a plenté
Et si en ont asez semé.
Tut l'an en fu la gent guarie
Et del second an grant partie.
Al tens as paëns que ja fu
Urent diable grant vertu,
Qui se feseient aürer
Et deus et devesces nomer.
Deu esteient come Phebus,
Jupiter, Mars, Mercurius.
Devesces erent Diana,
Juno, Venus et Minerva.
La gent qui en Deu ne creieient
Ne que de Deu ren ne saveient
Ymages peintes aürouent,
Les nons as deus lur aposouent.
Diane esteit une dïesce fol. 119vb
Mult deceivante et tricheresce.
Diable esteit qui en tel guise
Metteit la gent en son service.
Semblance de femme perneit,
Par quei le pople deceveit.
Entur Mirre meïmement
L'aürouent la fole gent.
Unquor quant seint Nicholas fu,
Aveit la gent en us eü
Aürer Diane et servir.
Seint Nicholas nel volt sofrir.

And handed the wheat over to the bailiffs.
All the measures without fail
They handed over according to number and reckoning;
Not a single measure was missing;
It had even increased, thanks to God.
They handed it over according to the measure
That they had first received,
And then they told the bailiffs
How much of the grain they had given away
And how they had found it again.
They all praised the Lord God'.
They gave thanks to the Lord God
And set great store by the holy man.
When Saint Nicholas had been left
With the wheat he had from the ships,
He shared it out and divided it up,
And God so increased it
That for the whole year they had plenty
And sowed a great deal of it.
For the entire year the people were provided for,
And for a great part of the second year.
In pagan times gone by
Devils had great power;
They had themselves worshipped
And called gods and goddesses.
There were gods like Phoebus,
Jupiter, Mars and Mercury.
The goddesses were Diana,
Juno, Venus and Minerva.
The people, who did not believe in God
And knew nothing about God,
Worshipped painted images*
And bestowed on them the names of the gods.
Diana was a goddess,*
Very treacherous and deceitful.
She was a devil who in such a way
Enticed people into her service;
She took on the form of a woman,
By which means she deceived people.
Around Myra likewise
The foolish people worshipped her.
When Saint Nicholas was there,
People were still accustomed
To worship and serve Diana.
Saint Nicholas refused to tolerate this.

L'image Diane brisat
Et desconfist et despesçat.
Le pople ostat de la folie
Et de cele mahomerie.
Mult fu li diable plein d'ire
Quant iloc perdi som empire,
Pur le pople qu'il out perdu,
Que longement out deceü.
Mult se pena, si il peüst,
Que seint Nicholas deceüst.
Qui savreit plus mal enginner,
Plus deceivre, plus empirer
Que diable que son pensé
A tut a mal faire atorné?
Une male confection
– Mediacon l'apelë hom –
A fait Diane apareiller.
Puis prist forme d'une moiller
Que semblout de religion,
De vesteüre et de façon.
En un petit batel se mist,
A une nief nager se fist
Qui se moveit a mer passer
Et a seint Nicholas aler.
Les mariners ad apelez
Si lur dist: 'Cest oille tenez!
Vus devez, ceo m'est viz, aler
A seint Nicholas ultre mer.
Son muster de cest oile oindreiz,
Les meiseres et les pareis.
Si ert remembrance de mei.
Vouee i sui, aler i dei,
Mes ne sui ore apareillee
Ne d'aler od vus aaisee.'
Le responz fu as mariners fol. 120ra
Que il le feront volenters.
Quant Diane out od els parlé
Et cel Mediacon livree,
Sempres l'urent si desperdue
Ne soit nuls que fu devenue.
Bon vent aveient pur sigler,
Ja esteient en halte mer,
Une nascele i unt trovee
De prodommes ben atornee.
Une persone seinte i out

He broke up Diana's statue,
Destroying and shattering it.
He turned the people away from their folly
And from this idolatry.
The Devil was filled with great wrath
When he lost his power there,
Because of the people he had lost,
Whom he had long tricked.
He strove hard, to the best of his ability,
To trick Saint Nicholas.
Who would be better equipped to plan more harm,
Deceive more and make matters worse
Than a devil whose thoughts
Were completely devoted to acts of evil?
A deadly preparation
—It is called Mediacon—
Was concocted by Diana.
Then she took on the form of a woman,
Who looked like a nun
From her clothing and appearance.
She got into a little boat
And rowed to a ship
That was passing by on the sea
And making its way to Saint Nicholas.
She called to the sailors
And said to them: 'Take this oil!
You have, I believe, to go to
Saint Nicholas beyond the sea.
You will anoint his church with this oil,
The walls and the partitions;
In this way I shall be remembered.
I have promised, I must go there,
But I am not ready now,
Or at leisure to go with you.'
The reply from the sailors was
That they would do so gladly.
When Diana had spoken to them
And handed over this Mediacon,
They immediately lost sight of her
So that no one knew what had become of her.
They had good wind for sailing
And were soon on the high seas;
They came across a small boat there,
Well equipped with worthy men.
There was a holy person on board,

Qui seint Nicholas resemblout,
Qui ces de la nief apela,
Corteisement od els parla.
'Qui fu', ceo dit, 'que vus livra
La femme que od vus parla?
Ditez, seignurs, ne me mentez:
Que est iceo que vus portez?'
Cil li distrent la verité,
Qu'une dame out od els parlé
Puis lui distrent de l'oingnement
Que il porterent et coment
Il le deveient atocher
Par les meiseres del muster.
Li seint hom lur ad respondu:
'Savez vus qui la femme fu?
Ceo fu Diane qui la gent
Deceit par son enchantement.
Et si le volez esprover,
Espandez l'oille en cele mer.'*
Desque l'oille la mer tochat,
Feu prist par tut et alumat.
Contre nature de la mer
Virent feu par tut alumer.
Endementers qu'il esgardouent
Cel feu dunt il s'esmerveillouent,
Furent les niefs si deviseez
Et si loinz a loinz desevreez
Qu'il ne purent od els parler
Ne qui ceo esteit demander
Qui lur aveit mustré l'esguait
Que Diane lur aveit fait.
Ne firent el mes tant siglerent
Qu'ai port vindrent qu'il desirerent.
A seint Nicholas sunt venu,
Si lui distrent qu'urent veü
Le miracle que lur mustrat fol. 120rb
Quant la mer par l'oille alumat.
Cil respondi: 'Deu en loëz,
Qui vus ceo fist que vus contez'.
Treis contez mist fors de prison
Qui erent pris par traïson.
D'ultre mer erent repeiré,
U enceis furent envïé
Par l'empereür, qui par guere
Aveit pur poi perdu la tere.

Who looked like Saint Nicholas
And who called to those on the ship,
Addressing them in courtly fashion:
'What was it', he said, 'that was handed to you
By the woman who spoke to you?
Tell me, my lords, do not lie to me.
What is it that you are carrying?'
They told him the truth,
That a woman had spoken to them,
Then they told him about the unguent
They were carrying and how
They were to apply it
To the walls of the church.
The holy man replied to them:
'Do you know who that woman was?
It was Diana, who tricks
People by her spells.
If you want to verify this,
Spread the oil on the sea.'*
As soon as the oil touched the sea,
It caught fire everywhere and burned.
Contrary to the nature of the sea,
They saw that it was all ablaze.
While they were looking at
This fire, which amazed them,
The ships became so separated,
And so far apart,
That they could not speak to each other,
Nor ask who it was
Who had revealed to them the trick
That Diana had played on them.
They did nothing other than continue sailing
Until they came to the port for which they were aiming.
They came to Saint Nicholas
And told him that they had seen
The miracle he described to them,
When the oil set fire to the sea.
He replied: 'Praise God for this,
Who did for you what you are relating'.
Nicholas released three counts from prison
Who had been arrested for treason.
They had come back from overseas,
Where they had earlier been sent
By the emperor, who through war
Had almost lost the land.

Quant urent fait tut cel afaire,
Tut trei se mistrent al repaire
Et vindrent a l'empereür,
Qui les receut od grant honur.
Par envius et par felonz
Fist puis prendre ces treis baronz
Et par un provost pautoner,
Qui pur els traïr prist louer.
Constantin fu li emperere,
Et danz Eparc sis provost ere,*
Et li dui conte aveient non
Nepocion, Arpelion
Et li terz Urs; tut trei a tort
Esteient ja jugé a mort.
El demain les deveit un pendre,
N'en voleit l'un raançon prendre.
En chartre la nuit apelerent
Seint Nicholas et reclamerent.
Il l'aveient servi jadis,
En ses preeres s'erent mis.
Ultre mer i eurent parlé
Quant a Mirre l'eurent trové.
Uns orez les i fist torner
Quant il durent passer la mer.
Veü li urent delivrer
Et tut fere quites clamer
Treis bachelers a mort dampnez
Et ja a descoler menez.
En la chartre lur en membrat,
Chescon d'els par non l'apelat,
Qu'a cest bosoing les socurust
Enz que nul d'els mort i eüst.
Et il lur vint ben a bosoing,
Et si ert il d'iloc mult loing
Sur la mer en altre contree, fol. 120va
De Rome i out meinte jurnee,
Mes angeleement alout
La u bosoignus l'apelout.
Tut seveit espiritelment.
Oëz cum ceo fu et coment!
Par la grace nostre seignur
Vint en songe a 1'empereür
Qui les contes out en prison.
A lui parlat par avision.
Si lui dit ceo que il gardast

When they had completed all their business,
All three set off for home
And came to the emperor,
Who received them with great honour.
Through envious and treacherous men,
He then had these three barons seized,
And through a vile prefect,
Who took money to betray them.
Constantine was the emperor,
And Lord Eparc was his prefect;*
Two of the counts were called
Nepocion and Arpelion,
And the third was Urs; all three were soon
Wrongfully condemned to death.
The following day they were to be hanged;
A ransom for them was refused.
In prison that night they called upon
Saint Nicholas and prayed to him.
They had served him in times gone by
And had asked to be remembered in his prayers.
They had spoken to him overseas,
When they encountered him in Myra.
A storm caused them to head there
When they were intending to cross the sea.
They had seen him free,
And have entirely vindicated,
Three young men condemned to death
And already led away for beheading.
In the prison they remembered this;
Each of them called upon him by name,
Asking him to help them in this hour of need,
Before any of them was put to death.
He came to them in their need,
Even though he was very far away from them,
On the sea in another region,
Many days' journey from Rome.
But, just as angels do, he went
To where the needy summoned him;
He knew everything spiritually.
Hear how, and in what way, this turned out!
By the grace of our Lord
The emperor who had the counts
In prison had a dream.
Nicholas spoke to him in a dream
And told him that he should see to it

Qu'il les treis contes delivrast
Qui a grant tort esteient pris
Et par envie en prison mis.
Servi l'aveient lealment,
Mes malveis loër lur en rent.
'Si les contes', dit il, 'ne renz
Que en ta chartre tenz leïnz,
J'en preerai l'altime rei
Que vengance prenge de tei.
Contre granz genz te combatras,
En la bataille occis serras,
Et tei et ta gent destruirunt,
Chen et oisel te mangerunt
Si les contes ne fais delivrer
Qui tu as fait enprisoner.'
Li empereres s'esfrea,
Ireement lui demanda
Qui ceo esteit que la parlout,
Qui par nuit esveiller l'osout.
Cil dist que Nicholas esteit
Et l'evesqué de Mirre aveit.
Itant dit et puis s'en tornat,
Al provost vint, a lui parlat.
'Eparc', dist il, 'maleüré,
Cheitif traïtur malsené,
Qui les treis contes as liez
Et senz forfait a mort jugez.
Va! sis deslivre sis deslie
Si tu joïr vols de ta vie.
Si tu nes mets fors de prison,
Le cors de tei et ta meson
Serunt destruit hastivement.
Ja n'en avras defendement.'
Cil demanda qui ceo esteit
Qui tels manaces lui feseit.
'Qui es', dit il, 'que parlé as?' fol. 120vb
Cil li dist: 'Jo sui Nicholas
Et si sui evesque de Mirre'.
Tornat s'en, plus ne li volt dire.
Constantin par matin leva,
Ses plus sages barons manda.
Eparc, le provost, venir fist.
Quant venuz furent si lur dist
Coment la nuit fu en esfrei.
Le provost respondi de sei.

That the three counts were freed,
Who had been captured most wrongfully
And imprisoned through jealousy.
They had served him loyally,
But he was giving them a wretched reward for it.
'If you do not hand over the counts', he said,
'Whom you hold here in your prison,
I shall ask the King on high
To take vengeance on you.
You will fight against a great army
And you will be killed in the battle;
They will destroy both you and your men;
Dogs and birds will eat you
If you do not free the counts
Whom you have imprisoned.'
The emperor was afraid
And asked him angrily
Who it was who was talking to him there,
Who dared to wake him at night.
He said that he was Nicholas
And had the bishopric of Myra.
He said as much and then departed.
He came to the prefect and spoke to him:
'Eparc, wretch', he said,
'Miserable, ill-intentioned traitor,
Who has bound the three counts
And condemned them to death for no crime.
Go! Free them and unbind them,
If you wish to enjoy your life.
If you do not release them from prison,
The bodies of yourself and your household
Will soon be destroyed;
You will be powerless to prevent it.'
He asked who he was
Who was making such threats against him.
'Who are you', he said, 'who has spoken?'
The other replied: 'I am Nicholas
And I am bishop of Myra'.
He left, not wanting to say anything more to him.
Constantine rose early;
He summoned his wisest barons.
He had Eparc, the prefect, come to him.
When they had come, he told them
How he had been frightened during the night;
The prefect responded likewise.

Dunt fist les contes apeler
Li emperere et demander.
Si lur ad dit irreement:
'Avez vus fait enchantement?
Estes', dist il, 'enchanteür,
Qui m'avez mis en tel freür?
Tote nuit m'avez fait veiller
Et ne sai par qui manacer.'
Cil se turent, mot ne sonerent.
De tel parole esbaï erent.
Cil lur dit: 'Pur quei ne parlez?
Dites pur quei ne responez!'
Nepocion ad respondu,
Qui li plus sage et l'einznez fu:
'Emperere, nus ne savom
Que respondre nus tei devom.
Unques de nus nul nen aprist
Qu'il tel enchantement feïst.
Ne savom nul enchantement
Ne d'enchanter n'avom talent.
Mes tant pur veir dire poüm
Qu'a tort nus tenz en ta prison.
Car lealment servi t'avom,
Si nus en renz mal gueredon.
De benfait ad l'en le col freit:
Sire, ensement nus as tu feit.
Pur ben faire et pur ben servir
Nus faiz come larrons tenir.'
'Ditez', fist il, 'ne celez paz:
Savez vus qui est Nicholas?'
Quant cil out Nicholas nomé,
Li uns ad l'altre regardee.
Lur meins envers le ciel leverent,
Od halte voiz Jesum loërent.
Seint Nicholas unt reclamé.
Dunt ad Nepocion parlé.
'Nicholas', dist il, 'conuissom,
Mult est de grant religion.'
Si escontat qui il esteit
Et en quel liu veü l'aveit.
Puis lur ad dit de ses bontez
Et de ses granz vertuz asez.
Sempres furent quite clamé
Et desliez et deslivré
Pur seint Nicholas, cel baron

fol. 121ra

Then the emperor had the counts
Summoned and questioned.
He said to them angrily:
'Have you performed some magic spell?
Are you', he said, 'sorcerers
Who have brought such terror to me?
You have had me lie awake all night,
Threatened by I don't know whom.'
They kept silent, not saying a word.
They were astonished by these words.
He said to them: 'Why do you not speak?
Tell me why you do not reply'.
Nepocion replied,
Who was the wisest and the eldest of them:
'Emperor, we do not know
What we should reply to you.
None of us has ever learned
How to cast such a spell.
We do not know any spells
And have no desire to cast spells.
But this much we can tell you in truth,
That you hold us in your prison wrongfully,
For we have served you loyally
And you are offering us a poor reward for this.
In return for a favour one can have one's neck broken.*
My lord, this is what you have done to us.
For our good deeds and good service
You are having us held like thieves.'
'Tell me', he said, 'do not conceal it;
Do you know who Nicholas is?'
When he had named Nicholas,
They looked at each other.
They raised their hands skywards
And in a loud voice praised Jesus;
They called upon Saint Nicholas.
Then Nepocion spoke:
'We do know Nicholas', he said,
'He is a man of great piety'.
He explained who he was
And in which place he had seen him.
Then he told them of his goodness
And his many great miracles.
They were quickly declared free
And unbound and released,
Because of Saint Nicholas, the man

Que li rei vit par avision.
Li trei conte ne demorerent,
A seint Nicholas dreit alerent.
Li emperere lur chargat
Grant present qu'il lui enveiat:
Dous chandelers d'or merveilluz
Et un teste d'or precius
Et od peres un vessel d'or
Et uncor plus de son tresor.
Quant li conte la venuz sunt,
Jus a ses pez a tere wont.
Ses pez baiserent et conterent
Coment pur lui delivré erent
Et de mort les out retornez.
Et cil lur dist: 'Deu en loëz!'
Longe chose serreit a dire
Et mult ennuose a escrivre
Les miracles et les socurs
Que li seinz hom fist a plusurs.
A tote la gent qu'il poeit
Come bon pere socureit.
A meinte gent dona santé
Qui esteient en enferté.
Plusurs delivra del diable,
Bon hom esteit et preciable.
Quant vint al jur que dut finer,
Que Deu le volt a sei mener,
Des clercs i out grant asemblee
Qui esteient de la contree,
E l'altre gent grant dol feseient
Pur lur seignur que il perdeient.
Une femme li vint devant,
D'une enferté santé querant,
Et seint Nicholas la seignat
Et tute seine s'en alat.*
Deu pria que s'ame gardast
Et ses angles li enveiast.
Ne demorat que un petit,
Les angles Deu entur sei vit.
Dunt començat a verseiller fol. 121rb
Un salme qui est al salter:
'In te, Domine, speravi'.
A tant l'alme del cors issi,
E li seint angle l'enporterent
Et la u Deu plout la poserent.

Whom the king saw in his dream.
The three counts did not delay;
They went straight to Saint Nicholas.
The emperor entrusted them with
A great gift, which he sent to Nicholas:
Two candelabra of superb gold
And a gospel-book bound in precious gold,*
A golden vessel with precious stones,
And yet more from his treasury.
When the counts came to him,
They fell at his feet.
They kissed his feet and told him
How they had been freed because of him,
And how he had saved them from death.
He said to them: 'God be praised'.*
It would be a lengthy task to relate,
And very tedious to write down,
The miracles and the helpful acts
Which this holy man performed for many people.
All those he could
He helped as a good father.
He restored health to many people
Who were sick.
He freed many people from the Devil;
He was a good man and of great worth.
When the day came for his life to end
And God wanted to bring him to him,
There was a large gathering of clerics
Who were from that region,
And the rest of the people were filled with great sorrow
For their lord whom they were losing.
A woman came before him,
Seeking a cure for an illness,
And Saint Nicholas made the sign of the cross over her
And she went away fully cured.*
He asked God to protect his soul
And to send his angels to him.
After a very short time,
He saw the angels of God around him.
Then he began to recite
A psalm that is in the psalter:
*In te, Domine, speravi.**
Then his soul left his body;
The holy angels took it away
And placed it where God wanted it.

Ceo savom ben certeinement
Qu'en paraïs est haltement.
Un sarcu de marbre ad hom pris
U le seint cors de lui fu miz.
Del chef de la tombe descort
Un seint oille que dedenz surt.
Par l'oille que del cors issi
A Deu puis meint enferm gari.
Un erchevesque ont puis posé
En cel honur et ordené,
Mes, ne sai par quele acheison,
En eisel l'en enveat l'om.
Cil qui fu sire de la tere
L'essilat, ne sai par quel guere.
Le oille a descurre cessat
Desque cil en exil alat.
Issi perdi l'en longement
En la cité cel oignement.
Quant cil vint que chacé esteit,
L'oille corut cum il soleit.
Quant seint Nicholas fu finez
Et de cest secle trespassez,
Grant doel en fu par la contree;
La gent en fu desconfortee.
Ymages firent li plusur
Qu'il onurouent en s'onur,
En son non et en sa semblance
Pur aver de lui remembrance.
Une feiz vindrent d'ultre mer
Païens pur cristiens rober.
Mult firent grant destruction,
Meint en menerent en prison.
Un d'els un ymage trova;
Mult bel li fu si l'enporta.
Puis demanda un des chaistifs
Qu'il en aveit mené et priz
Que ceo esteit et que valeit.
Deïst li veir; pru en avreit.
'Forme est', dist il, 'seint Nicholas.
Ja tant cum tu l'onureras
Ne serras povres ne cheitifs. fol. 121va
Un seint est mult poësteïz.'
Quant cil l'oï, meus la gardat
Et plus l'out cher et plus l'amat.
Al tolneu, la u il changat,

We know for certain
That it is in paradise on high.
A marble tomb was taken
And his blessed body placed within it.
From the upper part of the tomb there ran down
A holy oil that rose up from within it.*
With the oil, which issued from the body,
God later cured many a sick person.
Then an archbishop was appointed
To this office and ordained,
But, for some reason or other,
He was sent into exile.
The man who was lord over the land
Exiled him because of some war or other.
The oil ceased to run down
As soon as he went into exile.
Thus this unguent was lost
For a long time in the city.
When the man who had been driven away returned,
The oil ran as it used to.
When Saint Nicholas was dead
And had passed from this world,
There was great sorrow throughout the region;
People were in despair because of it.
Many people made statues,
Which they revered in his honour,
In his name and in his likeness,
So that he would be remembered.
On one occasion pagans came from overseas
To rob Christians.
They wreaked immense havoc
And took away many prisoners.
One of them found a statue;*
Considering it to be very beautiful, he took it away.
Then he asked one of the prisoners,
Whom he had taken away and captured,
What it was and what it was worth;
He should tell him the truth and would profit from doing so.
'It is an image', he said, 'of Saint Nicholas.
Never as long as you honour it
Will you be poor or miserable;
He is a very powerful saint.'
When he heard this, the man took better care of it,
Cherished it more and loved it more.
In the toll office, where he was a money-changer*

U il son aveir asemblat,
L'image seint Nicholas mist.
De sun aveir gardein le fist.
Un jur, ne sai com cil alat,
L'image l'aveir comandat.
Larrons, dunt par tut ad asez,
Aveit en la vile asemblez.
Senz garde unt cel aver trové.
Ne remist ren; tut l'ont emblé.
Quant li tolnoiers repeirat,
De son aver ren ne trovat.
N'est merveille si dolenz fu,
Que mult lui ert mesavenu.
Irrez fu, une verge prist,
A grant destreit l'image mist
Que son aveir deveit garder.
Come s'ele seüst parler,
L'aveir lui comanda a rendre.
Ne s'en saveit aillurz u prendre.
De ça et de la la feri,
Asez longez la debati.
Seint Nicholas ne volt lesser
S'image longes ledenger.
Vint as larrons qui departeient
L'aveir dunt compannion esteient.
'Alez', dist il, 'et si rendez
L'aveir que vus emblé avez!
Si non jo vus encuserai,
As justeses vus mustrerai.
Si vus ferai les oilz crever
Et les poinz et les pez culper.
Come felonz avez ceo priz
Que esteit en ma garde miz.
Debatu en sui malement.
Rendez l'aveir ignelement!'
Cil furent mult espoënté,
Arere unt tut l'aveir porté.
Quant li tolnoiers out le suen,
Saver poez mult lui fu buen.
Sempres reçut cristienté
Pur l'amur et pur la bonté
Seint Nicholas que son aveir
Li out fait des larons aveir.
Et meint altre se convertirent fol. 121vb
Pur le miracle que il virent.

And where he kept his own money,
He placed the statue of Saint Nicholas there,
Making him guardian of his money.
One day he went somewhere or other
And entrusted the money to the statue.
Thieves, of which there are many everywhere,
Had gathered in the town.
They found this money unguarded.
None of it remained; they took it all away.
When the toll-keeper returned,
He found nothing left of his money.
It is no wonder he was upset,
For this was a great misfortune for him.
He was angry, grabbed a stick
And abused the statue greatly
That was to have guarded his money.
As if it were able to speak,
He ordered it to give him back his money.
He did not know where he could get hold of any more.
He beat it on this side and that,
Striking it for a very long time.
Saint Nicholas did not want to let him
Harm his statue for long.
He came to the thieves, who were sharing out
The money for which they had banded together.
'Go', he said, 'and give back
The money you have taken.
Otherwise, I shall accuse you
And report you to the magistrates.
I shall have your eyes put out
And your hands and feet cut off.
You have taken as thieves what
Was placed in my charge.
I am being badly beaten because of this.
Give the money back at once.'
They were very much afraid
And took all the money back.
When the toll-keeper had what was his,
You can imagine that this pleased him greatly.
He immediately became a Christian
For the love and the goodness
Of Saint Nicholas, who had
Recovered his money for him from the thieves.
Many others also became converts
Because of the miracle they had seen.

Converti en fu la contree
Et a cristienté tornee.
Dit vus avom de cest païen.
Or redirum d'un cristien,
En quel guise il volt deceiver
Un judeu qui il dut aver.
Uns cristienz povres esteit,
D'or et d'argent mester aveit.
A un jüeu vint si lui dist,
De son bosoing consail requist,
Que aveir voleit enpronter
Mes n'aveit gueres a doner.*
Li judeu ben le conseillat,
Sur sa fei aveir lui prestat
E un image en gage prist
Seint Nicholas que cil li mist,
Que a lur muster iert levé
Et de grant manere honuré.
La vint terme de l'aver rendre.
Cil que l'out ne volt terme prendre
Ne li rendi ne terme prist.
Li judeu i vint si li dist
Que or son aveir li rendist.
Cil neiat et tut escondist.
Ceo dit que ren ne li deveit
Ne nule ren ne li rendreit.
Tant fu la parole menee
Et d'ambesdouz parz graantee
Que si cil jurer li voleit
Sur l'image qui plege esteit
Qu'il tut quite le clamereit.
Cil l'ottriat qu'il le fereit.
Ore entendez del cristïen!
Coveitise fait meinte ren.
Tut ceo qu'il dut roondement
Out asemblé estreitement.
Si l'enclost ferm en un baston,
Puis le liad si environ
Que nuls hom ne s'aparceüst
Que ja aveir dedenz eüst.
Quant vint al terme de la lei,
Son baston portat ovec sei.
Quant il al jurer s'aprismat,
Al judeu al poin le livrat.
Puis jurat qu'il lui ad rendu fol. 122ra

The region was converted by it
And turned to Christianity.*
We have told you of this pagan;
Now we shall tell you once more about a Christian,
In which way he tried to deceive
A Jew to whom he owed money.
There was a poor Christian,
In need of gold and silver.
He came to a Jew and told him this,
Asking for help in his hour of need,
Because he wanted to borrow some money,
But had scarcely anything to provide as security.*
The Jew was very helpful to him;
Trusting his word, he lent him money
And took as a pledge a statue of
Saint Nicholas, which the man handed over to him,
Because he was highly thought of in their church
And very greatly honoured.*
Then the time came to give the money back.
The man who had it refused to fix a date,
And did not give it back or fix a date to do so.
The Jew came to him and told him
That he should now give him back his money.
The man refused and denied everything.
He said he owed him nothing
And would give nothing back to him.
The matter was discussed
And agreed on both sides,
So that, if he were willing to swear to him
On the statue that was the pledge,
The Jew would let him off everything entirely.
He agreed that he would do so.
Now hear what happened to the Christian!
Avarice does many things.
Everything he owed, to a round figure,
He gathered together tightly.
He enclosed it firmly within a staff,
Then bound it all around
So that no one could detect
That there was any money in it.
When the agreed date for the oath arrived,
He took his staff with him.
When he was getting ready to swear the oath,
He placed it in the Jew's hand.
Then he swore that he had given him back

Tut iceo qu'il lui ad deü.
Apres ceo reprist son baston
Si s'en torna vers sa meison.
Le judeu fu dolenz et laz,
Asez maldit seint Nicholas.
Mult le blamout et si criout
Qu'il n'ert pas tel cum hom contout.
Quant li cristien s'en alout
Od son baston que il portout,
El chemin tel somoil li prist
Que il morust s'il ne dormist.
Einz el chemin dormir l'estut,
En travers la rue se jut.
Es vus iloc un char errant.
Le bover qui vindrent devant
Ne peurent l'ome tresturner
Ne les boes del char arester.
Sur le dormant le char passat,
Mort fu et le baston brisat
Et l'or que dedenz ert chaï:
Sempres i out levé grant cri.
Tut i corurent pur veer
Cel home mort et son aver
Qu'il aveit al baston encloz.
Dunt oïssez merveillus loz
De seint Nicholas le baron,
Que li out fait tel mustreison.
Car mustré out apertement
Que cil out erré malement.
Es vus le judeu la venu;
Le mort et l'aveir ad veü.
Seint Nicholas forment amat
Que ceo out fait si li voat
Que il cristien devendreit
Si revivre le mort feseit.
Sempres li hom morz revesqui,
Et li judeu se converti.
Baptizé fu, et sa maisnee
Fut od lui tute baptizee.
Et li revescu recontat
Coment vers le judeu ovrat.
Oëz, seignurs, si apernez
A rendre ceo que vus devez.
Nul hom ne deit chose voër
Qu'il ne voile rendre et doner,

Everything he owed him.
After this he took back his staff
And returned home.
The Jew was upset and unhappy;
He cursed Saint Nicholas greatly.
He blamed him a great deal and proclaimed
That he was not such as he had been portrayed.
When the Christian was walking along
With the staff he was carrying,
Such tiredness overtook him on his journey
That he would have died if he did not get some sleep.
He was forced to fall asleep on the road
And lie across the track.
Lo, a cart came along there.
The herdsmen who travelled in front of it
Could not avoid the man
Or stop the oxen that were pulling the cart.
The cart passed over the sleeping man.
He was killed and the staff broke;
The gold that was in it fell out
And a great cry went up at once.
Everyone came running up to see
This dead man and his money,
Which he had enclosed within the staff.
Then you would have heard wondrous praise
For the worthy Saint Nicholas,
That he had caused things to be revealed in this way.
For he had clearly shown
That the man had acted wickedly.
Lo, the Jew arrived;
He saw the dead man and the money.
He loved Saint Nicholas greatly
For what he had done, and he promised him
He would become a Christian
If he would revive the dead man.
The dead man immediately came back to life
And the Jew was converted.
He was baptized and his whole household
Was baptized with him.
The revived man told the story of
How he had acted with regard to the Jew.*
Hear, my lords, and learn
To give back what you owe.
No man should promise anything
That he does not intend to return and give back,

Car cil meesmes se dement fol. 122rb
Que ceo voue que il ne rent.
Savez que seint Nicholas fist?
Un hom lui voat et promist
Un vessel d'argent a doner.
Cil hom maneit ultre la mer.
Il fist fere un hanap mult bon,
Une grant masse i mist del son.
– Que vus fereie jo long plait? –
Quant le hanap out veü fait,
Ceo dit qu'unques ne vit meillur
Ne si ben fait ne de tel tur.
Mult li fu bel, mult le preisat,
A retenir le coveitat.
'Cest hanap', dit il, 'retendrai.
Un altretel faire en ferai
Dunt ben me porrai aquiter
Et a seint Nicholas doner.'
Dunt fist faire un altre vessel,
Asez ben fait et asez bel,
Mes pire fu et plus leger
Et meinz valut que li primer.
Dunt ad fait son eire aprester
Et son atur a mer passer,
A aler a seint Nicholas.
Porter ad fait ces .ii. hanaps.
Mena sa femme et un enfant
Que il aveit ja asez grant.
Od l'altre gent entrat en mer,
Si comencerent a sigler.
Quant en cele mer parfond furent,
A une hure quant manger durent,
Le meillur hanap, le plus cher,
Fist avant traire a son manger.
Son fiz comandat de la mer
Prendre al hanap as meinz laver.
Cil de la nef fors s'estendi;
Od tut le hanap fors chaï.
Tost l'urent sa gent deperdu,
Si lur fi viz qu'il neé fu.
Es vus par cele mer grant plur,
Grant marrement et grant dolur.
Grant dol firent tut, mes li pere
Le feseit greingnur et la mere.*
Crient et plurent et guaimentent,

For he contradicts himself
Who promises what he does not return.*
Do you know what Saint Nicholas did?
A man promised him and agreed
To give him a silver vessel.
This man lived overseas.
He had a very fine goblet made
And invested a great deal of his wealth in it.
—Why should I give you a lengthy account of this?—
When he had seen the finished goblet,
He said he had never seen a finer one,
Neither so well made nor of such a shape.
He was delighted with it, prized it greatly
And had a great desire to keep it.
'I shall keep this goblet', he said,
'And have another made like it;
Then I can discharge my duty properly
And give it to Saint Nicholas.'
Then he had another vessel made,
Very well made and very fine,
But it was inferior, lighter
And less valuable than the first one.
Then he prepared his journey
And got ready to cross the sea
To go to Saint Nicholas.
He had these two goblets brought with him.
He took his wife and a child
Who was now quite grown up.
With the rest of the people he set sail
And they began the journey.
When they were travelling over the deep sea,
At a time when they were due to eat,
He had the better goblet, the more expensive one,
Brought out for his meal.
He told his son to get water in the goblet
From the sea in order to wash their hands.
The boy stretched out from the ship
And fell in, along with the goblet.
His people had soon lost sight of him
And it was apparent to them that he had drowned.
Lo, there was great weeping at sea,
Great sorrow and great grief.
Everyone lamented greatly, but the father
And the mother did so even more.*
They cried, wept and bewailed their fate,

Compleinent sei si se dementent.
Rumpent cheveus, depescent draz, fol. 122va
Mult reclaiment seint Nicholaz.
Empres lur fiz en mer saillessent
Si li notiners nes tenessent.
Sovent les veïssez lever,
Sovent chaïr, sovent pasmer.
Quant revenent de pasmeison,
Lur fiz apelent par son non,
Et gardent la u il chaï
Od grant pleintë et od grant cri.
A tant vent espessat al tref,
Que fist plus tost cure le nef.
Dreitement sunt al port venu
U cil esteient esmeü.
A terre sunt ignele pas
Al muster vont seint Nicholas.
Le hanap porterent d'argent
Qui estait fait derainement.
Veilles et afflictions firent.
A l'alter vindrent si l'offrirent.
Mes li hanap si resorti,
Qu'a la terre a lur piez chaï.
Et cil l'ont ignelment repris,
Arere l'ont sur l'alter miz.
Et le hanap si halt sailli
Qu'il detres ens el quer chaï.
Mult furent cil espoënté,
Esbaï et mult esfreié.
Le hanap tut derechef pristrent,
Od poür sur l'alter le mistrent.
Unc nel seurent si afermer
Ne si tenir ne si garder,
Que de lur mainz nen eschapast
Et par sur els halt ne volast.
En la nef hors del quer chaït.
Tout li mouster en retentit.
Tuz cil qui cele chose virent
A grant merveille s'esbaïrent.
Dunt veïssez home dolent!
Li sire et la femme ensement
Plorent et plaignent et criouent,
Batent culpe, Deu reclamouent.
Claiment sei peccheürs et laz,
Sovent apelent seint Nicholas.

And mourned and lamented.
They tore at their hair, rent their clothes
And called upon Saint Nicholas repeatedly.
They would have jumped into the sea after their son
If the sailors had not restrained them.
You would often have seen them getting up,
Often falling down and often losing consciousness.
When they came round,
They called their son by his name
And looked at the spot where he had fallen,
With great lamentation and loud cries.
Then the wind increased in the sail,
Which made the ship move faster.
They came straight to the port
To which they were travelling.
On land they hastened
To the church of Saint Nicholas.
They carried the silver goblet
That had been made later;
They held vigil and did penance.*
They came to the altar and offered it,
But the goblet jumped back up
So that it fell to the ground at their feet.
They picked it up at once
And placed it back on the altar.
The goblet jumped up so high
That it fell back behind them into the choir.
They were very frightened,
Astonished and very much afraid.
They took the goblet immediately
And fearfully placed it on the altar.
They never succeeded in securing it,
Or holding it down or keeping it in place,
So that it did not escape from their hands
And fly up high above them.
It fell out of the choir into the nave.
The whole church resounded as a result.
All those who witnessed what happened
Were exceedingly astonished.
Then you would have seen unhappy people!
Both the lord and his wife
Wept, lamented and cried out;
They said their *mea culpa* and called upon God.
They proclaimed themselves sinners and wretches
And frequently called upon Saint Nicholas.

Ben seurent que pur lur pecchez
Esteit lur fiz en mer neez
Et lur offrande refusee
Et de sur l'alter regetee.
N'osent mes garder vers l'alter, fol. 122vb
Les clercs apelent, ne funt el.
De chef en chef lur ont conté
Coment il aveient ovré
Del veissel qu'il ourent toleit,
Pur ceo que tant ben fait esteit.
Quant il se furent fait confez,
Ne demurat gueres aprez:
Es vous al mouster lor enfaunt,
Le hanap en sa main portaunt.
En la mer l'aveit receü
Et tout tens par la main tenu
Seint Nicholas, que mal n'i out,
Od le hanap que il portout.
Sanz mal, sanz dolur et sanz mort
Le menat li bons seinz al port
Et desqu'al muster le menat,
U cil pere et mere trovat.
Al muster devant l'alter vint
Od le hanap qu'en sa main tint.
Sur l'alter le mist sil beisat,
Traist sei arere sil leissat.
Unques le hanap ne se mut.
Quant le pere son fiz conut
Et la mere, vers lui alerent,
Grant joie firent, Deu loërent
Et tei mult, seint Nicholas ber.
Dunt lur contat cil de la mer
Que seint Nicholas l'out gardé
Et salvement a port mené.
Getro, uns hom de grant bonté,
Mist jadis en une cité
Que Escorande ert apelee.
Del seint oïd la renomee
Que mult esteit de grant poeir
Qu'as peccheürs poeit valeir.
Volenté out qu'a lui irreit,
Si sa femme le consenteit.
Sil requerreit que Deu preast
Que fiz u fille lur donast.
Eüfrosine, sa muiller,

They well knew that because of their sins
Their son had drowned at sea,
And their offering had been refused
And cast away from the altar.
They no longer dared look towards the altar;
They summoned the clerics and did nothing else
Telling them from start to finish
How they had acted
With regard to the vessel, which they had taken
Because it was so beautifully made.
When they had confessed,
Scarcely any time elapsed.
Lo, their child was in the church,
Holding the goblet in his hand.
He had been grabbed hold of at sea
And held on to all the time
By Saint Nichlolas, so that he was not harmed,
Along with the goblet he was carrying.
Without his being harmed, suffering or dying,
The good saint had brought him to port
And taken him right up to the church
Where he found his father and mother.
He came before the altar in the church
With the goblet he held in his hand.
He placed it on the altar and kissed it;
He then withdrew and left it.
The goblet never moved.
When the father recognised his son,
And his mother too, they went up to him,
Rejoicing greatly, and praising God
And yourself a great deal, worthy Saint Nicholas.
Then the boy who had been in the sea told them
That Saint Nicholas had saved him
And brought him safely to port.*
Cethron, a man of great goodness,*
Once went to live in a city
That was called Excoranda.
He heard of the saint's fame,
That he possessed very great power
And could bring help to sinners.
It was his wish to go to him,
If his wife agreed to this.
He would ask him to pray to God
That he would give them a son or a daughter.
Euphrosina, his wife,*

Nel volt mie faire leisser,
Ne nel volt mie retenir.
As oreisons voleit partir.
La dame lui dona congé,
Cil ad son eire apareillé.
Getro esteit asez mananz
D'avers, de rentes, de serjanz.
Richement et od bon corage
Alat en cel pelerinage.
Quant il en la cité entrat,
Grant pleinte et grant plur i trovat,
Car seint Nicholas iert finez fol. 123ra
Et en la bere ja posez.
Tut le pople et tut le clergé
Trovat pur lui desconseillé.
Dolent esteient si plorouent
Et ses granz bontez remembrouent.
Quant Getro solt que mort esteit
Seint Nicholas que il quereit,
Mult fu tristes, mult li pesat.
Tuz les mestrez clercs asemblat.
Si lor moustrat k'il aveit quis,
Pur quei se mut de soun pais.
'Seignurs', dit il, 'pur Deu merci
D'altre tere sui venu ci.
Parler voleie od cest baron,
De mes pecchez quere pardon.
Mes morz est ke n'i ai parlé.
Las dolent! trop ai demoré.
Or vous pri touz ke vous m'aidez
E ke par dreit me cunsilez.'
Cil respondent: 'Nus ne savom
Quel conseil doner te puissom'.
Getro lur dit: 'Seignurs, dez draz
Me donez de seint Nicholaz,
Sis enporterai en ma terre.
Meillurs reliques ne puis querre.
Si ma femme aver les poeit,
Mult richement les gardereit.'
Le chapelein le graanterent,
Des draz ne sai que li donerent.
Getro de jurnee en jurnee
Est revenu en sa contree.
Par le conseil de sa muiller
Fist une esglise edefier.

Did not want to let him do this,
But she did not want to hold him back.
He wanted to set off on pilgrimage.*
The lady gave him permission to depart
And he made preparations for his journey.
Cethron had great wealth,
In possessions, income and servants.
In rich array and in good heart
He departed on this pilgrimage.
When he entered the city,
He found great lamentation and great weeping there,
For Saint Nicholas had died
And already been placed on the bier.
All the people and all the clergy
He found in despair because of him.
They were grief-stricken and in tears,
Remembering his great goodness.
When Cethron discovered that Saint Nicholas,
Whom he was seeking, was dead,
He was very sad and it upset him greatly.
He gathered all the principal clergy together
And explained to them what he had been seeking,
And why he had left his country.
'My lords', he said, 'in God's mercy
I have come here from another land.
I intended to speak with this worthy man,
To seek pardon for my sins,
But he died before I could speak to him.
O unhappy one! I have delayed too long.
Now I beg all of you to assist me
And help me rightfully.'
They replied: 'We do not know
What help we can give you'.
Cethron said to them: 'My lords, give me
Some of Saint Nicholas's garments
And I shall take them away to my country;
I could not find any better relics.
If my wife could have them,
She would look after them magnificently.'
The chaplains granted this
And gave him some garments or other.
Over a number of days Cethron
Travelled back to his region.
On the advice of his wife,
He had a church built.

Une esglise bele fit faire,
Les draz i mist pur saintuaire
Que del seint baron aportat.
Apolonies la dediat.
Apollonies prodom esteit,
La croce et l'evesché aveit.
N'iert pas uncor li an passez,
Getro out un fiz, si fu neez
En decembre; en cel jur dreit
Feste seint Nicholas esteit.
Le fiz apelent Deudoné
Pur ceo que Deus lur out doné.
Getro viveit mult lealment
Et Eüfrosine ensement.
Seint Nicholas forment amouent
Et serveient et honurouent.
Al miels que il unques poeient
Feste seint Nicholas feseient
Des clercs richement conreer, fol. 123rb
De fere lire et de chanter.
Deudoné crut et amendat
Si cum le tenz avant alat.
Mes puis en urent grant dolur,
Grant marrement et grant tristur,
Car robeür l'enfant emblerent,
Ultre le mer loinz l'amenerent.
Uns empereres l'achatat
Qui paënz ert mes mult l'amat.
Pur ceu ke beus e gens esteit,
Al manger soun seingnour serveit.
Le jor de la feste al baron
De qui miracles nus parlom
Par devaunt soun seingnour serveit
Od un hanap ke il teneit.
Si començat a suspirer,
Apres le suspir a plorer.
L'emperere vers lui gardat,
Vit le plorer si demandat:
'Que as que plores devant mei?'
'Sire', dit il, 'faire le dei
Quant me remembre de ma gent,
Qui unt pur mei grant marrement
Et grant dolur et grant ennui,
Car il ne sevent u jo sui.
Emblé lur fui, dolent en sont,

A beautiful church was constructed,
And as holy relics he placed there the garments
He had brought from the holy man.
Apollonius consecrated it.
Apollonius was a worthy man,
Who had the crosier and the bishopric.
A year had not yet passed
When Cethron had a son, and he was born
In December; on that very day
It was the feast of Saint Nicholas.
They called the son Deudoné*
Because God had given him to them.
Cethron lived very loyally,
As did Euphrosina.
They loved Saint Nicholas greatly.
And served and honoured him.
To the very best of their ability
They celebrated the feast of Saint Nicholas,
And they equipped the clerics richly
For readings and singing.
Deudoné grew and got bigger
In the course of time.
But then because of him they suffered great sorrow,
Great grief and great sadness,
For pirates stole the child
And took him far away across the sea.
An emperor bought him,
Who was a pagan, but he loved him greatly.
Because he was handsome and noble
He served his lord at mealtimes.
On the day of the feast of the man
Of whose miracles we are speaking,
He was serving before his lord
With a goblet he was holding.
He began to sigh,
And after sighing to weep.
The emperor looked at him,
Saw him weeping and asked:
'What do you have to cry about in front of me?'
'My lord', he said, 'I am forced to do so
When I remember my people,
Who are suffering great pain because of me,
And great sorrow and great distress,
For they do not know where I am.
I was taken away from them; they are sorrowful,

Et en cest jur grant feste font
De seint Nicholas, un seignur,
Et jo fui né a icest jur.
Grant feste solt fere mis pere
A icest jur ovec ma mere.
Mult unt hui fait grant asemblee
Des clercs de tote la contree
Que il font chanter halt et bas,
Ben et bel pur seint Nicholas.'
Li emperere le ferit,
Par maltalent lui defendit
Qu'il mes devant lui ne plorast
Ne que sa gent ne regretast.
Deudoné ne se pout retraire,
Traist sei en suz, ne sout el faire,
Od tut le hanap que il tint.
Seint Nicholas devant lui vint,
Deudoné prist si l'enmenat,
A Escorande l'enportat.
Uncore ert sis pere al muster
Tut sul remis pur Deu preer.
Portes closez, dedenz ourout
Et seint Nicholas reclamout,
Qui festë esteit a cel jur. fol. 123va
Pur son fiz iert en grant tristur.
Es vus devant lui Deudoné.
Seint Nicholas l'out amené
Qui ounkes portes nen ovrit,
Ne cil nel sout ne ne sentit.
Uncor quidout estre ultre mer
Et al paleis le vin porter
Al seignur que servir deveit
Od le hanap qu'uncor teneit.
Quant Getro d'ureisonz levat,
Asez longement l'esgardat
Ainz que conustre le peüst
Que ceo son fiz Deudoné feust.
Mes puis qu'il l'out enterscé,
Corut vers lui si l'ad beisé.
Chescon d'els dous grant joie fist.
Dunt voat Getro et promist
Que chescon an tant cum vivreit
Feste seint Nicholas fereit.
Dunt menat son fiz a maison,
Grant joie et grant feste fist hom.

1036 And on this day they hold a great feast
For Saint Nicholas, a lord,
And I was born on this day.
My father is accustomed to holding a great feast
1040 On this day, together with my mother.
Today they hold a great assembly
Of clerics from the whole region,
Whom they get to sing high and low,
1044 Finely and well, for Saint Nicholas.'
The emperor struck him,
And he forbade him spitefully
From ever weeping before him again,
1048 Or from mourning his people.
Deudoné could not help himself;
He stood up, not knowing what else to do,
With the goblet he was holding.
1052 Saint Nicholas came before him,
Seized Deudoné and took him away,
Bringing him back to Excoranda.
His father was still in the church,
1056 Having remained there alone to pray to God.
With the doors closed, he was praying inside
And calling upon Saint Nicholas,
Whose feast it was that day.
1060 Because of his son he was experiencing great sadness.
Lo, Deudoné was before him.
Saint Nicholas had brought him,
Without opening any doors
1064 And without the boy knowing or realising it.
He thought he was still overseas,
Carrying the wine in the palace
To the lord whom he had to serve,
1068 With the goblet he was still holding.
When Cethron rose from his prayers,
He looked at him for a long time
Before he was able to recognise
1072 That it was his son Deudoné.
But once he had recognised him,
He ran towards him and kissed him;
Each of them was filled with great joy.
1076 Then Cethron vowed and promised
That each year, as long as he lived,
He would celebrate Saint Nicholas's feast.
Then he took his son home
1080 And there was great rejoicing and great celebration.

Eüfrosine en fu mult lee
Que devant ceo iert corucee.
Dunt ad Deudoné reconté
Cum seint Nicholas l'out porté
D'ultre la mer en si poi d'ure.
La mere l'oit, de joie plore.
Chescon an puis tant qu'il vesquirent
La feste seint Nicholas firent.
Devant cels ne trovum nus pas
Qui si servist seint Nicholaz
De faire feste et d'onurer,
De clers faire lire et chanter.
De maint liu et de mainte tere
Vindrent gent le cors seint requere
Et seint Nicholas depreer
Et faire offrande a son muster.
Un marchëand s'aparillat
D'aler al seint, en veie entrat
Od grant aveir que il portat.
A une nuit se herbergat.
Li ostes qui l'out herbergé
De l'aveir out grant coveité.
Par nuit leva si l'estranglat,
Puis les membres li detrenchat.
Quant par peces l'out detrenché,
En un tonel l'ad tut muscé.
Si le salat en tel endreit fol. 123vb
Come char que l'om manger deit.
Quant issi l'out fait, sil guerpi,
A son lit vint si s'endormi.
Seint Nicholas que cil quereit,
A qui merci crier voleit,
Par Deu et par sa grant vertu
A l'ostel vint u le mort fu
Come chivaler richement
Aparillé corteisement.
Al tonel vint u fu le corz,
Tuz les membres en ad trait horz.
Sis posa tuz la u il furent,
Tut ensement cum estre durent.
A tant li hom mort revesqui
Mes pas ne solt ne ne senti
Que il eüst esté occis
Ne que il fust al tonel miz,
Car plaie ne sursaneüre

Euphrosina was very happy;
Before this, she had been filled with sorrow.
Then Deudoné told them
How Saint Nicholas had brought him
From overseas in such a short time.
His mother heard this and wept for joy.
Henceforth each year, as long as they lived,
They celebrated the feast of Saint Nicholas.
Before them we cannot find anyone
Who served Saint Nicholas in this way,
Celebrating the feast and honouring him,
And having clerics read and sing.*
From many places and many lands
People came to visit the blessed body,
To pray to Saint Nicholas
And make offerings in his church.
A merchant made ready
To go to the saint, and he set off
Carrying a large amount of money.
One night he took lodging
And the host who lodged him
Greatly desired the money.
In the night he got up and strangled him,
Then cut up his limbs.
When he had cut him into pieces,
He hid him in a barrel.
He put salt on him in the same way
As on meat that is to be eaten.
When he had done this, he left him,
Came to his bed and fell asleep.
Saint Nicholas, whom this man was going to visit,
And whom he intended to beg for mercy,
Through God and his great power
Came to the lodging where the dead man was,
As a knight, richly
Dressed in courtly fashion.
He came to the barrel where the body was
And took out all the limbs.
He placed them all where they had been,
Just as they were meant to be.
Then the dead man returned to life,
But he did not know or realise
That he had been killed,
Nor that he had been placed in the barrel,
For neither injury or scar

N'out en sun cors ne blesceüre.
Quant li seint out od lui parlé
Et dulcement l'out conforté,
Ala s'en, et li marchëant
Remist desquë al jur dormant.
Al matin levat si apelat
L'oste par non sil saluat.
Congé prist, aler s'en voleit,
Car longe veie a fere aveit.
A grant merveille s'esbaï
Li pecchere quant il l'oï.
Levat en sus et si li dist
Pur quei et coment il l'occist
Et que il l'out tut descolpé
Et al tonel mis et salé.
'Prodom', dit il, 'jeo te tuai,
Tes os quassai, ta char salai.
Mult est poant seint Nicholas
Et socurable a qui tu vas.
Ben deit l'om requere et preer
Le seint que si ben poet aider.'
Quant li marchëant l'entendi,
A Damnedeu graces rendi.
A l'oste dit que ren ne sout
Ne mes itant qu'il veü out
Un chivaler mult bel et gent
Que l'out conforté seintement.
Dunt firent paiz si s'acorderent, fol. 124ra
A seint Nicholas en alerent.
Chescon pur son pecché preat
Que Deus, ceo crei, lur pardurat.
Un enemi avom mortel
A tut le pople communel.
Ceo est diable qui d'envie
Est tut tens plein e de boisdie.
Quant hom plus sert son creatur
Tant vait diables plus entur
Pur deceiver, pur enginner,
Pur desturber, pur desveier.
Uns hom maneit en Lombardie,
Asez esteit de bone vie.
Dampnedeu serveit et amout,
Ses seinz, ses seintez honurout.
Seint Nicholas meïmement
Amout et cherisout forment.

Did he have on his body, or any wound.
When the saint had spoken with him
And comforted him tenderly,
He departed and the merchant
Remained asleep until dawn.
In the morning he rose and called to
His host by name and greeted him.
He took his leave, intending to depart,
For he had a long journey to make.
The sinner was exceedingly
Astonished when he heard him.
He got up and told him
Why and how he had killed him,
And that he had cut him into pieces
And placed him in the barrel and salted him.
'Good fellow', he said, 'I killed you,
Shattered your bones and salted your flesh.
Saint Nicholas to whom you are going
Is very powerful and full of succour.
It is right to seek out and pray to
The saint who can be of such help.'
When the merchant heard him,
He gave thanks to the Lord God.
He told the host that he knew nothing,
Except that he had seen
A knight, very handsome and fair,
Who had comforted him in saintly fashion.
Then they made peace and came to an agreement:
Both of them went to Saint Nicholas.
Each man prayed for his sins
For which God, I believe, will pardon them.*
We have a mortal enemy,
Shared by all people:
That is the Devil, who at all times
Is filled with envy and cunning.
When a man serves his Creator more,
The Devil surrounds him all the more
To deceive him, to trick him,
To trouble him and to make him go astray.
There was a man living in Lombardy;
He lived a very good life,
Served and loved the Lord God
And honoured all his saints, both male and female.
He also loved Saint Nicholas
And cherished him greatly.

Chescon an feseit asembler
Clercs a sa feste pur chanter.
Cunrai lur aparillout bon
Et a chescon donout del son.
La vint le jur que il deveit
Faire la feste qu'il soleit.
Par matinet ainz jur levad,
Vesti sei, sa femme apelad.
'Levez suz', dit il, 'levez suz!
Dame, n'est tenz de dormir plus.
Alum al servise al muster
Que nus seium al comencer!'
'Volenters', dist elë, 'alom!
Mes veü ai une avision
Que anoit m'ad mult esfreiee.
Uncore en sui espoëntee.
Car mei iert vis qu'uns lous veneit,
Qui ma mamele me toleit,
La char mangout, le sanc bevait.
Or nus doint Deus que ceo ben seit!'
Quant il eurent issi parlé,
Al muster sunt amdui alé.
A Deu comandent lur ostel
Et lur enfant et lur chatel.
Quant le matin fu pece alé
E li solail fu halt levee,
La maisnee fu departie.
La maison urent si guerpie
N'i out remis si l'enfant non, fol. 124rb
Qui tut sul gardat la maison.
Touz esteient en grant effrei
D'apariler as clers cunrei.
Es vous la un diable erraunt
En semblaunce d'un penëaunt.
A la maison vint, enz entrat,
Del pain l'almone demandat.
Li enfez li dit: 'Dunt venez?
Qui estes vus? Coment alez?'
Dunt respondi li enemiz:
'Jo sui de mult lontain païz.
Nuls hom vivaunt n'i parvendreit
La dount jeo sui, ja taunt n'irreit.
Od un rei ere en sa meisoun,
Ovec moi oi un cumpaignoun.
Mis compainz forment se preisat,

Each year he brought together
Clerics to sing at his feast.
He fed them well
And gave gifts to each of them from his wealth.
Then the day arrived when he was to
Hold the accustomed feast.
He rose early, before daybreak,
Dressed and called to his wife.
'Get up', he said, 'get up,
My lady, there is no more time for sleeping.
Let us go to the service in church
So that we are there at the beginning.'
'Gladly', she said, 'let us go.
But I have had a dream,
Which terrified me last night;
I am still frightened by it.
For it appeared to me that a wolf was coming
Which removed my breast,
Ate my flesh and drank my blood.
Now may God let everything be well with us!'
When they had spoken thus,
They both went to the church.
To God they entrusted their house,
Their child and their possessions.
When daybreak had long passed,
And the sun had risen high,
The occupants of the house had departed.
They had left the house so that
Only the child remained behind,
Who was in sole charge of the house.
They were all in a state of great agitation
To get everything prepared for the clerics.
Lo, a devil arrived there
In the form of a penitent.
He came to the house, entered
And asked for a gift of some bread.
The child said to him: 'Where are you from?
Who are you? What journey are you making?'
Then the devil replied:
'I am from a very far-off country.
No man alive could reach the place
From which I come, however far he travelled.
I lived with a king in his house,
Together with a companion.
My companion had a very high opinion of himself,

Vers nostre seignur s'orgoillat.
Pur ceo que iert en grant honur,
S'orgoillat contre son seignur.
Nostre seingnour vout guerreier,
Mes il ne pout pru espleiter.
Pur ceo ke jeo me tinc od lui,
Deseritez sumes amdui.
Puis ne poïmes fere pez
Ne ne ferom, ceo cre, jamez.
Puis que jo fui desherité,
Ne poi unques estre acordé,
Et li sire est de grant poeir;
Ne poi vers lui vertu aveir.
Par envie et par maltalent,
Quant ne poi fere acordement,
Començai touz ceus a murdrir
Qu'il aveit pris pour lui servir.
Tant en ai oscis et murdri
Nel avrai mes espeneï.
La penitence en faz tant gref
Que ja nul jur n'ert treite a chef.
Ne me faire plus demorer!
Done mei del pain, les m'aler!'
Mult par est diable veisus,
Mult se peine d'enginner nus.
Mult s'entremet de desturber
Cels qui volent Deu honurer.
Quant li enfes out aporté
Le pain que cil out demandé,
Li diable vers lui alat
Sil prist sil traist si l'estranglat.
Puis lui dist: 'N'ai soing de manger,
Mes la gent faire trebucher
Ceo est moun delit, ma viande;
Mis quers nule altre ne demande'.*
Quant li servant le mort troverent,
Mult lur pesat et mult plurerent.
Asez tost fu noncié al pere.
Oëz quel dol en fist la mere.
Unques plait al muster ne tindrent,
Celeement a maison vindrent.
Quant lur enfant estranglé virent,
Quel merveille si grant doel firent?
Grant marrement unt et grant doel.
Mels volsisent murir lur voel

And rebelled against our Lord.
Because he was held in such great honour
He rebelled against his lord.
He wanted to do battle with our Lord,
But he could not get the upper hand.
Because I supported him,
We were both disinherited.
Afterwards we could not make peace
Nor shall we ever do so, I believe.
Since I was disinherited,
I have never been reconciled,
And the lord is of great power.
I could not prevail against him.
Through envy and spite,
Since I could not be reconciled,
I began to murder all those
Whom he had taken as his servants.
I have killed and murdered so many of them
That I shall never have atoned for them.
So hard is the penance I am doing for it
That it will never come to an end.
Do not hold me up any longer.
Give me some bread and let me go.'
The Devil is very cunning;
He strives very hard to deceive us.
He takes great pains to harm
Those who wish to honour God.
When the child had brought
The bread he had asked for,
The devil went up to him,
Grabbed him, drew him to him and strangled him.
Then he said to him: 'I have no desire to eat,
But to bring people down,
That is my delight, my food,
My heart asks for none other'.*
When the servants found the dead boy,
They were very distressed and wept profusely.
This was announced to the father very quickly.
Hear what grief the mother displayed.
They stopped what they were doing at church
And secretly returned home.
When they saw their child strangled,
Is it any wonder they were filled with great sorrow?
They were grief-stricken and greatly distressed.
They would have preferred to be dead themselves

Que il veïssent lur fiz mort.
Ne quident mes aver confort.
Li pere plure et grant pleint fait,
La mere les chevels destrait fol. 124va
Et dit: 'Lasse, maleüree!
Ahi, Deus! Cum male destinee!
Et Deus! Cum grant mesaventure!
Tant esteie er lee et seüre.
Ore ai tote joie perdue.
Lasse, cheitifve, malvenue!
Mon songe ai ben a veir prové.
Ben en sai or la verité:
Li leus qui mon traiant perneit
Et que le sanc de mei beveit,
Fu ben dreite signifiance
Que jo avraie grant pesance.
Mon sanc but et prist mon traiant
Cil qui ad occis mon enfant.
Glorius reis de paraïs,
Seint Nicholas, pur quei soffriz
Que nus nostre enfant perdissom,
Quant a ton servise esteium?'
La mere issi se dementout,
Le cors teneit si l'enbraçout.
Grant doel aveit par la meison.
Qui doleit si li pere non?
'Las mei dolent', fait li cheitif.
'Quel dolur est que jo sui vif!
Et Deus! Tant fui lee que jo l'oi.
Et Deus! Si m'ad duré si poi.
Ma joie m'ad duré petit,
Ore ai grant doel. Veir dit qui dit:
Enpres grant ris ad mult grant plur,
Apres grant joie, grant tristur.
Uncore hui matinet al jur
N'aveie jo doel ne dolur.
Grant mal m'est venu en poi d'ure.
Deus! Quel pecché m'est coru sure.
N'aveie od mei meis un enfant
Et cestui sul amoue tant.
Perdu ai mon fiz et mon eir
Et mes altre ne quide aveir.
Bel fiz, bel cher, tant mar vus vi.
Mort, que fais tu? Vien si m'osci!
Mort, quer me prent et si me rent

Than to see their son dead.
They did not think they would ever again find comfort.
The father wept and lamented greatly;
The mother tore out her hair
And said: 'Woe is me, unhappy one!
Ah, God! What an evil destiny!
O God, what a terrible misfortune!
Yesterday I was so happy and secure.
Now I have lost all joy.
Woe is me, wretch, unfortunate one!
I have proved my dream to be quite correct.
Now I know the truth of it.
The wolf that was removing my breast
And drinking my blood,
Was a very true sign
That I would have great suffering.
My blood was drunk and my breast removed
By whoever killed my child.
Glorious King of Paradise,
Saint Nicholas, why did you allow
Us to lose our child,
When we were at a service for you?'
The mother lamented in this way,
She held the body and embraced it.
There was great sorrow throughout the household.
Who was grieving if not the father?
'O sorrowful one', said the wretch,
'What sorrow to be still alive!
O God! I was so joyful when I had him.
O God! He was with me for such a short time.
My joy has been so short-lived,
Now I am filled with grief. It is a true saying:
After much laughter comes much weeping.
After great joy, great sadness.*
This morning at daybreak
I still had no sorrow or pain.
Great harm has come to me in a short time.
O God! What sin has descended upon me!
I only ever had one child with me,
And this one alone I loved so much.
I have lost my son and my heir,
And I do not expect to have another.
Fair son, cherished one, how sad that I ever saw you!
Death, what are you doing? Come and kill me.
Death, take me and give me back

Celui dunt ai le quer dolent!
Bel fiz, de ceo sui angoissuz
Que jo ne poi morir pur vuz.
Seint Nicholas, que en ferai
De mon enfant que perdu ai?' fol. 124vb
Le pere et la mere plorouent,
Pleineient sei si se pasmouent.
Quant il eurent asez crié
E longement plaint et ploré,
En la chambre unt le cors porté
Et as serganz unt deveé
Que ja mar nul semblant feront
Del doel que de lur enfant unt,
Pur les clers qui s'esmaiereient
E lor manger en guerpireient.
Issi fut cum il cummaunderent
Et les clers vindrent si dignerent.
As tables erent ja asiz
Et devant els le manger miz
Et as hanaps aveient vin.
Es vus a l'us un pelerin
Qui ad le digner demandé
El non de seinte charité.
Seignurs, ceo fu seint Nicholas.
Plein de pité ne voleit pas
Que li prodom son fiz perdist,
Ne il ne altre quil servist.
Quant il out le digner rové
Et li sires l'out enz mené,
'Ne puis', dist il, 'estraitement
Digner ovec presse de gent.
En ta chambre manger me fai,
Car altrement ne mangerai.'
Li prodom ne se volt retraire
De l'almone qu'il deveit faire.
Le pelerin ovec sei mene
En sa chambre la plus demene,
U le cors de l'enfant giseit
Que le pere muscé aveit.
Seint Nicholas la s'aprismat,
Par la main le prist sil nomat.
Puis depreat nostre seignur
Qu'il par sa grace et pur s'amur
Et pur lui feïst le revivre.
Es vus l'enfant sain et delivre.

The one for whom my heart is filled with sorrow.
Fair son, I am distressed by this,
That I could not die instead of you.
Saint Nicholas, what shall I do
With my son whom I have lost?'*
The father and mother wept,
Lamented and lost consciousness.
When they had cried out a great deal
And lamented and wept for a long time,
They carried the body into the bedchamber
And forbade the servants
From showing any sign at all
Of the grief they had for their child,
Because of the clerics, who would be dismayed
And abandon their meal because of it.
Things were as they commanded,
And the clerics came and dined.
They were already seated at table,
And the food had been set before them;
They had wine in their goblets,
When, lo, at the door there was a pilgrim
Who asked for food
In the name of holy charity.
My lords, it was Saint Nicholas.
Full of pity, he did not want
This worthy man to lose his son,
Neither he nor anyone else who served him.
When he had asked for food
And the lord had brought him within,
'I cannot', he said, 'at close quarters
Dine with a crowd of people.
Have me eat in your bedchamber,
For otherwise I shall not eat.'
The worthy man did not want to hold back
The alms it was his duty to give.
He took the pilgrim with him
Into his very own chamber,
Where the body of the child was lying,
Which the father had hidden away.
Saint Nicholas went over to it,
Took him by the hand and called his name.
Then he prayed to our Lord
That in his grace and for love of him,
And also for his sake, he should bring him back to life.
Lo, the child was well and sprightly.

Levat sus, son pere apelat,
Sa mere prist si l'enbraçat.
Seint Nicholas s'esvanoï
Que nul nel vit ne ne l'oï.
Quant li enfez fu revescu
Et il fu seinz et salfs veü
Et la chose fu coneüe
Que de lui esteit avenue,
Tote la gent grant joie firent fol. 125ra
Et grant loënge a Deu rendirent
Et seint Nicholas plus amerent
Et plus volenters l'onurerent.
Ben iert sa feste enceis gardee,
Puis fut treis tant mels celebree.
Ben esteient li clers servi,
Puis furent meus et plus cheri.
Ben devom bon seignur amer
Et ben servir et honurer.
Qui ben et bel sert sun seignur
Ben tost avra preu et honur.
Bon sire son serf pas n'ublie
Quant veit qu'il a mester d'aïe.
Pur ceo que cil aveit amé
Seint Nicholas et honuré,
Ben li mustra que il l'amout
Et que de lui li remembrout.
Puis que seint Nicholas finat
Et de cest secle trespassat,
Fu son cors tenu en cherté
Et en mult grant auctorité.
Defors Mirre, enpres la cité,
Out un muster d'antiquité.
La fist l'om le cors sevelir;
Moines i out pur Deu servir.
De la tombe u le cors giseit
Une manere d'oile isseit.
La gent que alcon mal aveient
S'i oigneient si garisseient.
Li seinz la vont pur seinteé*
Et li malade pur sancté.
Meint grant miracle i ad Deus fait:
Meint palacinouz, meint contreit,
Meint fevrus et meint engroté
Reurent par cel oile sancté.
N'out baron en tote la tere,

He rose, called to his father
And took his mother and embraced her.
Saint Nicholas vanished
So that no one saw or heard him.
When the child had come back to life,
And was seen to be hale and hearty,
And it became known
What had happened to him,
Everyone was filled with joy,
And they gave great praise to God,
Loved Saint Nicholas all the more
And honoured him more willingly.
His feast was henceforth well kept;
From then on it was celebrated three times better.
The clerics were well served
And afterwards cherished all the more and better.
We should love a good lord
And serve and honour him well.
He who serves his lord well
Will soon have profit and honour.
A good lord does not forget his servant
When he sees that he needs aid.
Because this man had loved
Saint Nicholas and honoured him,
Nicholas demonstrated that he loved him
And remembered him.*
After Saint Nicholas had died
And left this world,
His body was cherished
And greatly revered.
Outside Myra, near the city,
Was an ancient church;
They had the body buried there;
There were monks there to serve God.
From the tomb where the body lay
There issued a kind of oil.
People who had something wrong with them
Rubbed the oil on themselves and were cured.
Saints went there for sanctity*
And the sick for health;
God performed many a great miracle there.
Many who were paralysed and many who were lame,
Many who had fevers and many who were ill,
Regained their health from this oil.
There was no one in the whole world,

S'il s'entremeïst del requere,
Que le cors peüst remuer
Ne en sa contree porter,
Mes Deus ne lur volt consentir,
Ne al seint ne vint a pleisir.
Li reis qui out en poësté
Et Mirrë et tut le regné
I envead un son baron,
Un prodome, par espison
Si ja le cors aveir peüst fol. 125rb
Par nul engin que unques feust.
Cil vint, unques ne l'atochat
Ne unques parler n'i osat.
Quant vit que estre ne porreit
Que il eüst ceo qu'il querreit,
Seint Nicholas ad depreé
Que se li plait par sa pité
Li doint alcone ren de sei,
U char u dent u os u dei
Que il veer puisse et beiser;
N'aveit de ren tel desirer.
Quant il ne se lest remuer
Ne de cest liu allurz porter
Ne ren ne pout de li aver,
Doint lui que il poisse veer
Et beiser de lui que que seit,
Car ren nen est que tant coveit.
Li seint oï que cil pread
Si li fist ceo qu'il desirat.
Li prodom que jo vus ai dit
Od tut un vesselet petit
Vint al segrestain si lui dist
Qu'il de l'oile lui departist.
Et cil ad le vesselet pris,
De l'oile lui ad dedenz miz.
Puis li ad en sa main tendu;
Cil l'ad homblement receü.
Quant il le tint, dedenz gardat,
Un des dens del seint i trovat.
Lee fu, unques n'out esté si;
A Dampnedeu graces rendi
E al seint dunt il ad le dent.
Sovent la beisat dulcement.
Mult l'out cher et grant joie en fist,
En une casse d'or la mist

If he had tried to acquire it,
Who could have removed the body
Or taken it to his own country;
God refused to allow this,
Nor was it to the saint's liking.*
The king who had power over
Both Myra and the whole kingdom
Sent one of his men there,
A worthy man, as a spy,
To see if he could have the body
Through any ruse which has ever existed.
The man came, but never touched the body
Or ever dared to speak about it.
When he saw that it was not possible
For him to have what he was seeking,
He beseeched Saint Nicholas,
If in his pity it pleased him,
To give him something of his,
Flesh or tooth, bone or finger,
Which he could see and kiss;
He had no such desire for anything else.
Since he did not permit himself to be moved,
Or to be taken away from that place,
And he could have no part of him,
He should allow him to see
And kiss something of his, whatever it might be,
For there was nothing he desired so much.
The saint heard this man's prayers
And did for him what he desired.
The worthy man I have been telling you about,
With a tiny vessel,
Came to the sacristan and told him
That he should share some of the oil with him.
He took the little vessel and
Put some of the oil into it for him.
Then he held it out to him in his hand;
The man took it humbly.
When he held it, he looked inside
And found one of the saint's teeth there.
He was happy, he had never been more so;
He gave thanks to the Lord God
And to the saint whose tooth he had.
He often kissed it tenderly,
Cherishing it greatly and rejoicing over it;
He placed it in a golden casket

Et sur un alter la posa.
Sempres quant il l'engarda,
De la casse vit l'oille core
Et fors serunder et decore.
Dunt l'ad en un paile posé
Et mult estreit envolupé
Pur l'oile faire retenir,
Que mes ne s'en peüst issir.
Quant il plus l'estreinst et covri
Tant corut plus et espandi.
Unques ne s'en solt tant pener
De lier ne d'envoluper fol. 125va
Qu'il unques retenir peüst
Que tut tens l'oille ne corust.
Dunt se prist a desesperer
Que la dent n'en porreit porter.
Tant la garda et tant la tint
Qu'enpres la vespre la noit vint.
En une boiste la ferma,
Mult estreitement le garda
De si que par matin levast
Et la dent od lui en portast.
Quant la noit en dormant se jut,
Seint Nicholas lui aparut,
Que en sa main le dent portat.
Devant lui vint si li mustrat.
Puis li ad dit: 'Oz tu, amiz!
Jo t'ai fait ceo que tu quesiz.
Veü as et beisé ma dent,
Mes tu n'enporteras nïent.
Ne puis mie estre divisez
Ne nul membre de mei sevrez.
L'om ne me pot nïent partir,
Ne jo nel puis pas consentir.'
Quant il out ceo dit, sil guerpit.
Cil s'esveillat, del lit saillit.
La dent quist la u il l'out mise.
Ne la trovat, car ele ert prise.
Dunt solt ben, nïent ne dota,
Que seint Nicholas l'enporta
Et que il out a lui parlé.
A merveille li a pesé
Que il n'en pout porter la dent
Ne que le seint ne li consent.
Oëz que nus trovom lisant,

And put it on an altar.
Whenever he looked at it,
He saw the oil flowing from the casket,
Spilling over and running down.
Then he placed it on a piece of silk brocade
And wrapped it very tightly
In order to stem the flow of oil,
So that it no more of it could escape.
The more he grasped it and covered it
The more it ran and flowed.
He was never able to devote sufficient effort
To binding and wrapping it
As to be able to stem the flow;
It continued to run constantly.
Then he began to despair
Of ever being able to take the tooth away.
He looked after it and held on it
Until night followed evening.
He enclosed it in a box
And watched over it very carefully,
Until he got up in the morning
And took the tooth away with him.
While he lay asleep that night,
Saint Nicholas appeared to him,
Holding the tooth in his hand.
He came before him and showed it to him.
Then he said to him: 'Listen, my friend.
I have done for you what you asked.
You have seen and kissed my tooth,
But you will not take anything away.
I cannot be divided up
Or have any of my limbs separated from me.
No one can split me up in any way,
And I cannot agree to this.'
When he had said this, he left him.
The man awoke and jumped out of bed.
He looked for the tooth where he had put it,
But did not find it, for it had been taken.
He was well aware, he had no doubt,
That Saint Nicholas had taken it
And that he had spoken to him.
He was dreadfully upset
That he could not take the tooth away
And that the saint would not allow this.
Hear what we find in writing,

Que li ber fist en son vivant.
Un hom esteit palacinus.
Tant ert feble, tant dolerus,
Ne poeit sur ses pez ester
Ne ses mains a son chef lever.
Palacin est de tel nature,
La u il prent longement dure.
Ja des membres u hom l'avra
Nule ren faire ne purra.
Si li fait les membres secher
Que il ne se pot ren aider.
Uns hom que out ceste enferté
Si ne poeit aveir sancté,
D'une vile u il miz aveit fol. 125vb
Qui Sivin apelee esteit*
Fut a seint Nicholas mené;
Sur un chival fut aporté.
Li seint hom al muster urout;
Quaresme esteit si jeünout.
Cil que le malade aportat
Seint Nicholas pur lui preat
Que Deu preast et requesist
Que cel malade sein feïst.
Savez que seint Nicholas fist?
De l'oile de la lampe prist
Si en oinst le cors environ
Et fist a Deu une ureison.
Desqu'il l'out oint, cil sailli suz,
Ben sain, unques n'out esté pluz.
Cil qui ainz ne poeit aler
Ne se moveir ne retorner
Et qui aveit le palacin,
Tut sein, tut lé tint son chemin.
Apres ceo n'out ke un petit, MS O, fol. 160va
Uns hom plein de mal esperit
Desqu'al mouster amenez fut. MS O, fol. 160vb
Fous ert, le sens aveit perdut.
Devez ert de male manere
E a parei e a maisere
E par tout la ou il poeit
Hurtout sun chef et debateit.
Taunt aveit sun chef demené,
Taunt debatu, taunt dehurté
Que toute la char ert blemie
Et toute quassee et purrie.

What this fine man did in his lifetime.
A man was paralytic;
He was so weak and in so much pain
That he could not stand upright
Nor raise his hands to his head.
Paralysis is such
That, where it takes hold, it lasts for a long time.
With the limbs in which a man has it
He will never be able to do anything,
And it makes these limbs grow so thin
That he has no use of them.
A man who had this infirmity
And could not be cured,
From a town where he lived,
Which was called Sibinos,*
Was brought to Saint Nicholas;
He was brought on horseback.
The holy man was praying in the church;
It was Lent and he was fasting.
The man who brought the invalid
Prayed on his behalf to Saint Nicholas,
That he would pray to God and ask him
To make this invalid well.
Do you know what Saint Nicholas did?
He took some of the oil from the lamp,
Anointed the body all over with it
And said a prayer to God.
As soon as he had anointed him, the man jumped up,
In good health, he had never been better.
The man who earlier could not walk
Or move or turn,
And who was suffering from paralysis,
Went on his way in good health, filled with joy.
Just a short while after this,
A man filled with an evil spirit
Was brought to the church.
He was mad, he had lost his wits,
And had a wretched form of madness;
Against the wall and side of the house,
And wherever he could,
He would bang and beat his head.
So severely had he mistreated his head,
So beaten it and banged it,
That all his flesh had gone pale
And become all damaged and rotten.

Li verm ki de la char nasseient
De toutes pars aval chaeient.
A treis houmes l'esteut mener,
Autrement ne poeit aler.
Cist ont seint Nicholas prié
Que de cel desvé eit pité,
Si prie Deu nostre seingnour
Que saunté lui doinst pour s'amour.
Li bons confessour le seingnat,
Del diable le delivrat.
Cil ki aveit esté dessvez
Fut ben gariz et ben sanez.
En Deu creeit et reconut
E onourat si cum il deut
Qui l'aveit guari par sa grace.* MS B, fol. 125vb
Ci falt le livre mestre Guace
Qu'il ad de seint Nicholas feit,
De latin en romanz estreit
A l'oes Robert le fiz Tiout
Qui seint Nicholas mult amout.
Mult avreit longes a penser
Qui en romanz voldreit conter
Et torner en consonancie
Ses granz miracles et sa vie.
Ne nus ne trovom tuz escriz,
Ne nus nes avom tuz oïz.
Depreom Deu, Nostre Seignur,
Que pur cest seint et pur s'amur
Nus doint de nos pecchez pardon
Et venir a confession
Que nus od Deu regner poissom
In secula seculorum.
Amen. Amen.

The worms that were breeding in the flesh
Were tumbling down on all sides.
It took three men to bring him,
Otherwise he could not walk.
They begged Saint Nicholas
To take pity on this madman
And to pray to God our Lord
That he would give him health for love of him.
The good confessor made the sign of the cross over him
And freed him from the Devil.
The man who had been mad
Was fully cured and in good health.
He believed in and acknowledged God,
And, as he should, he honoured him,
Who had cured him by his grace.*
Here ends Master Wace's book,*
Which he has composed about Saint Nicholas.
He has translated it from Latin into French
For the use of Robert Fitz Tout,
Who loved Saint Nicholas very dearly.
It would require a great deal of effort
If one wanted to relate in French,
And turn into rhyme,
His great miracles and his life.
We do not find them all written down
And have not heard them all.
Let us pray to God, our Lord,
That for this saint and for love of him
He will give us pardon for our sins
And let us come to confession,
So that we can reign with God
In secula seculorum.*
Amen. Amen.

NOTES

For a more extensive set of notes, especially with regard to linguistic matters and the establishment of the text, see Ronsjö, ed., pp. 175–94.

1. This line could mean 'To those who do not know Latin'. For a discussion of the common hagiographic motif of the cleric who must translate for the audience who does not understand Latin, see Laurent, *Plaire et édifier*, pp. 58–59. Uitti compares the uses of the theme in the prologues of the *Nicholas*, the *Rou* and Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* ('The Clerkly Narrator Figure', pp. 399–400). See the note to v. 37 below.

12. For comments on the form of repetition found in vv. 9–12, see Ronsjö, p. 24, note 1.

20. The meaning of the term *substance* here is not entirely clear. Keller translates as 'efforts?' (*Étude descriptive*, p. 153). We prefer 'essence, whole being'. This is the only example of the term found in Wace's five works.

30. In v. 29 the verb *servir* has a direct object (*Deu*), but in v. 30 there is an indirect object (*as barons*).

34. These lines evoke the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30, Luke 19:12–27; Le Saux, *Companion*, p. 55).

37. Wace uses the term *romanz* ('French vernacular, French') three times in his prologue (vv. 37, 39, 41) and again in vv. 1548 and 1552, which indicates the importance he attributed to the concept of translating material from Latin that will be of benefit to those who cannot understand this language ('Qui ne poënt latin entendre', v. 44). See also *Margaret*, v. 739, *Brut*, vv. 3823, 6921, 14866, *Rou*, III, vv. 63, 153, 5298, 5300, 5311. In some examples (*Brut*, v. 14866, *Rou*, III, vv. 153, 5311) the meaning is 'a work composed in the French vernacular'.

45. The city of Patara (Old French Patras) is given as Nicholas's place of origin by Mombritius.

67. In the *Rou* Wace uses the expression 'a lettres mis' to describe his own early education: 'A Chaem fui petiz portez, / Illoques fui a letres mis' ('I was taken to Caen as a small child, / And there I went to school', III, vv. 5306–07, see also III, vv. 251–52).

88. As Ronsjö points out (p. 176), Wace likes to comment on the vicissitudes of fortune. See also vv. 1293–94, *Brut*, vv. 4433, 8868, and *Rou*, II, vv. 2609, 2866, 3212, III, 9078, 11210.

94. On the term *gaëlise* 'prostitution', see Adolf Tobler, 'Étymologies françaises et provençales', pp. 238–39.

120. The episode related in vv. 81–120 is very similar in the Mombritius and Falconius versions. Wace has considerably curtailed the Latin account, largely removing the father as a character and suppressing both the narrator's comments and the direct speech. Both Nicholas's direct address to the father (vv. 111–14) and the indication of a separate purpose for each of the three gifts are due to Wace himself. See Le Saux, pp. 65–67. On the dramatisation of this episode, see Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 311–24.

128. Nicholas was bishop of Myra, but in v. 127 Wace refers to his predecessor as an archbishop (*erceveske*) and to the office as an archbishopric (*ercevescé*, v. 130). In v. 639 his successor is also called archbishop. But in v. 533 Nicholas refers to himself as bishop of Myra' (see also v. 135) and in v. 516 his office is described as a 'bishopric' (*evesqué*; see also vv. 140, 142, 150, 160). In the Latin texts Nicholas is often given the title 'archiepiscopus'.

166. The term *pan* 'broad shallow vessel' presumably derives from Old English *panne* (Late Latin **panna*).

194. The miracle recounted in vv. 157–94 is not found in any of the versions that could have been known to Wace. He may therefore have been drawing on oral tradition. See K. Fissen, *Das Leben des heiligen Nikolaus*, pp. 26, 60, Ida Del Valle de Paz, *La leggenda di S. Nicola*, pp. 42–43, and Ronsjö, p. 44.

210. It is not clear in vv. 207–10 whether it is the mother who rends her clothing and gnaws her hand etc., or whether these actions are performed by the son. In v. 211 of Ronsjö's base manuscript Nicholas makes the sign of the cross over the mother ('Quant seint Nicholas la seigna'), indicating that the scribe of this manuscript attributes the actions to the mother. As the other three manuscripts have 'le seigna', Ronsjö emends his text, presumably with the intention of attributing the actions to the son. See Introduction, p. 257.

226. The miracle described in vv. 213–26 is not found in any of the early Latin prose texts which Wace could have used. But it is known both from Latin hymns dating from the eleventh century and from three extant

rhymed versions of the legend that seem to predate Wace's version. The story appears, therefore, to have been popular before Wace composed his narrative, which could explain why his account is short and preceded by the comment 'N'en ferai mie grant parole' (v. 214). He also adds (vv. 223–26) that this miracle led to the establishment of Nicholas's feast, i.e. December 6. This suggests that the story was already well known in his day. The miracle was in fact to become of one the most popular to be attributed to St Nicholas. For further details, and a comparison of Wace's version with that found in MS Paris, BNF, lat. 5290, see Ronsjö, pp. 42–45. On the virtual exclusion of this miracle from vernacular Lives and its frequent appearance in late medieval English and northern French visual arts, see J. Fredell, 'The Three Clerks and St. Nicholas in Medieval England'. Young discusses the dramatisations of this miracle (*The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 324–37).

276. MSS DO have 'famire'. The *CND* rhymes 'famire' with 'sire' (v. 521), and 'famine' rhymes with '-ire' in the *Rou*, II, v. 3982 (Ronsjö, ed., p. 83).

302. It is true that Constantine I (or the Great), emperor from the year 306, was emperor during Nicholas's lifetime. He was self-proclaimed Augustus in 309 and accepted as such in the East in 310. From 324 until his death in 337 he was emperor of a united empire. He moved the capital of his empire to Byzantium in 330, renaming it Constantinople.

347. For *image / ymage* the *Old French–English Dictionary* gives the meanings 'image, likeness, figure, drawing, reflection, portrait, statue'. In v. 347 'painted images' seems appropriate for 'ymages peintes', but in v. 361 it is likely that Nicholas breaks Diana's 'statue'. When a pagan finds an 'ymage' of Nicholas in v. 663, this would also seem to be a 'statue' (see also vv. 655, 678, 680, 690, 698). See the note to v. 735 for a discussion of the 'ymage' in the miracle of the broken staff.

349. The Diana with whom Nicholas battles is not the Athenian but the Ephesian Artemis, patron of sailors, with whom many early saints clashed (Jones, *St Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan*, pp. 17–19). The description of Diana in vv. 421–22 and 353–54 repeats almost exactly a passage in the *Brut* (vv. 637–40; Ronsjö, ed., p. 26).

424. There may be a lacuna in the text here. MSS OC indicate that the sailors obeyed Nicholas and poured the oil on the sea.

460. MS D has the form *Eparcus*. Mombritius gives the name as Ablavius (he was also known as Ablabios). Wace is correct that he was a prefect or

provost, and he is known to have been a favourite of Constantine. He was murdered after Constantine's death. Ronsjö describes him as a 'parvenu sans scrupules' (p. 181).

565. The proverb 'De bien fait col frait' is seemingly quite common. Elisabeth Schulze-Busacker cites ten examples, not including the present one (*Proverbes et expressions proverbiales*, p. 203).

592. The term *teste* / *texte* could be used to designate a book, but in particular it was used for (ornamental) gospel-books. It was also used for an ornamental metal plate for covering a gospel-book, and for altar-cloths made from gold or silver material. See the note to v. 677 of Waters's edition of Benedeit's *Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*, p. 112.

600. Le Saux has shown how Wace recast the episode related in vv. 445–600 (*Companion*, pp. 68–70). He omitted the first part, in which the Emperor Constantine sent the three counts to suppress an insurrection and, having succeeded in their mission, returned to a hero's welcome. On their journey they came upon three young soldiers, who had been unjustly condemned to death by a venal judge named Eustachius. Nicholas was called upon to help and he managed to save them just as the executioner was about to strike the fatal blow. Nicholas then confronted the corrupt judge. The only background elements mentioned by Wace are that Constantine was afraid of losing some overseas territory because of war (vv. 447–50) and that, having been sent to deal with the situation, the counts had been honoured greatly on their return. In his version, Constantine, prompted by envious and wicked counsellors ('Par envius et par felonz', v. 455) and by his steward Eparc (Eparus), who had accepted bribes to betray them, had the counts arrested and ordered them to be hanged (rather than being ransomed, as Wace adds to his source, vv. 464–66). We are then told how the counts remembered encountering St Nicholas in Myra and how he had rescued and vindicated the three young men (vv. 471–81). Wace has transferred the venality of Eustachius to Constantine's steward Eparc and he attributes a greater degree of culpability to the Emperor himself. As Le Saux points out, Wace emphasises, especially in the direct speech in the episode, Nicholas's stature as a miracle worker, largely obliterating the 'undercurrent of political criticism in the Latin texts, and Nicholas's less than harmonious relationship with the great and not-so-good of his world' (*Companion*, p. 69). Nicholas's preoccupation is with saving the innocent from unjust death.

620. MSS OC name the woman in this episode as Egenia (Latin Eugenia). Cf. Falconius, *S. Nicolai acta primigenia*, p. 122.

627. The psalm concerned is Psalm 30 (NRSV Psalm 31).

636. Although a variety of miraculous emanations issued from other saints' tombs, Nicholas's *myron* 'seems to have been the prototype for a great range of cults that involved curative oil' (Clive Foss, 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', p. 142).

663. See the notes to vv. 347 and 738.

675. A *tolneu* (Medieval Latin *toloneum*) was the place where taxes or tolls were levied by the toller (*tolnoier*, v. 685; Latin *tolonarius*) for some right or privilege.

722. On the episode recounted in vv. 659–722, see Jean-Pierre Bordier, 'Le *Jeu de saint Nicolas* ou le miracle de l'image'. In Johannes Diaconus's version a Jew, having heard of Nicholas's miraculous powers, had the statue made himself in Nicholas's likeness. When he left home, he made the statue the guardian of his money and threatened Nicholas with the whip if he were burgled. In Wace's version statues were made by Christians in order to compensate for the loss of Nicholas and to honour and remember him (vv. 655–58). Bordier points out that in Johannes Diaconus's version the statue is St Nicholas himself, but in Wace it remains a symbol of him (pp. 60–61). See Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 337–51.

732. In place of *gueres* ('scarcely') MSS AOC have *gages* 'pledge, guarantee'.

738. Ronsjö (p. 184) interprets the term *image* in v. 735 (see also v. 750) as a 'tableau d'autel'. In iconographic representations of the miracle, it is often difficult to tell whether the 'ymage' is an icon or a statue; see, for example, the Chartres window that shows both the miracle of the statue and the miracle of the broken staff, reproduced in Colette Manhes-Deremble, *Les Vitraux narratifs*, p. 357, plate 39, positions 23 and 26). The meaning of the verb *lever* in v. 737 is not entirely clear. If it refers to the statue, the meaning would probably be literally 'raised on to the altar' or metaphorically 'honoured'; if it refers to Nicholas, the sense would be 'esteemed, honoured'. Ronsjö also suggests that *lever* here is equivalent to *lever de batesme*, but this is rightly rejected by Keller (*Étude descriptive*, p. 212). Ronsjö interprets *Que* at the beginning of the line as *Qui*, but it could also be taken to mean 'because'.

806. A very similar miracle to that recounted in vv. 724–806 is attributed to St Menas (Paul Devos, 'Bons juifs et mauvais chrétiens', pp. 160–62). The miracle is hardly pro-Jewish (the Jew converts to Christianity), but it is interesting that as in the *Margaret* (see note to v. 126) Wace ascribes anti-Semitic attitudes to the villain and not to the saint. At the time Wace was writing, the Jewish communities were well-established in Normandy and living with, by turns, tolerance and violent oppression. For a detailed history of the important Jewish communities in mid-twelfth-century Caen and the surrounding region, see Norman Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy*, pp. 217–93 (esp. pp. 217–25 for probable attacks on Jews associated with the Second Crusade, and pp. 226–30 and 240–45 for the presence of intellectuals such as Rashi's grandsons Samuel b. Meir, known as Rashbam, and Jacob Tam and their disciples).

812. Ronsjö (p. 185) compares vv. 809–12 with vv. 693–96 of the *Conception Nostre Dame*.

854. The manuscript reading here (*Mult greingnur fit la mere*), which indicates that it was the mother whose grief was the greatest, is seemingly corrupt and has been emended by Ronsjö.

875. The expression 'veilles et afflictions' is also found in the *Conception Nostre Dame*, v. 316, and in MS C of the *Rou* (Paris, BNF, nouv. acq. fr. 718), III, v. 7369.

934. On sculpted depictions of the miracle related in vv. 807–934, including the font in Winchester cathedral, see Le Saux, *Companion*, pp. 76–77. As Le Saux points out (p. 76), this miracle combines the themes of resurrection, baptism and the Eucharist (symbolised by the goblet).

935. The name Cethron is found in Mombritius (p. 307). Wace uses the form Getro. On the dramatisation of this episode, see Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 351–60.

945. The form Euphrosina is found in Mombritius (p. 308). Wace uses the form Eufrosine.

948. The plural form 'oreisons' is used here in the rare sense of 'pilgrimage'. See Keller, *Étude descriptive*, p. 174.

1001. Mombritius names the boy as Adeodatus (p. 308). We have retained Wace's form Deudoné.

1092. So numerous are the changes made by Wace to his source for the episode recounted in vv. 935–1092, i.e. the Mombritius / Falconius text, that Le Saux considers his version to be a 'distinct version in its own right' (*Companion*, p. 72). The story (vv. 935–1092) embraces two separate miracles: (i) the childless parents obtain some of Nicholas's clothing and a child is born; (ii) the child is abducted and in due course brought back home by Nicholas. Wace probably reversed the order of the early events: in the Latin version Nicholas has died and preparations have been made for his funeral, then Cethron arrives, explains his presence and asks for a piece of the saint's clothing. The abduction motif is simplified by Wace, as in the Latin version the pirates abduct all those who are worshipping at Nicholas's feast, including his parents. When the latter are released, they search for their child in vain. For a more detailed comparison between the accounts of the abduction episode in Wace and Mombritius, see Le Saux, pp. 72–73. Young studies the dramatisation of this miracle (*The Drama of the Medieval Church*, II, pp. 351–60).

1156. Although it was long thought that the miracle described in vv. 1097–156 could not have been known to Wace from any Greek or Latin manuscript and that he must therefore have drawn on oral tradition (Fissen, *Das Leben des heiligen Nikolaus*, pp. 57–59, Del Valle de Paz, *La leggenda di S. Nicola*, pp. 42–43), Ronsjö (pp. 39–42) has shown that in addition to a Latin version found in a thirteenth-century manuscript, mentioned by Del Valle de Paz (p. 42), the miracle could have been available to Wace in Latin, as several Latin manuscripts have survived from the twelfth century. For a Latin text of the miracle, see Ronsjö, pp. 211–12.

1250. From v. 1201 to v. 1250 there are a number of lacunae in Ronsjö's base manuscript (B). To remedy this situation, he has made use of O. See his note to v. 1201.

1294. Wace makes a similar statement in the *Brut*: 'Emprés grant ire grant amur, / Emprés grant hunte grant enur' ('After great anger great love, after great shame great honour', vv. 4433–34).

1310. Laurent reveals the close resemblance between the lamentations in vv. 1259–310 and those of the parents in the earliest version of the *Life of St Alexis* (*Plaire et édifier*, pp. 361–63). Doubt has been expressed as to whether vv. 1295–310 were written by Wace or added later by a scribe. Delius omits them from his edition, but includes them in his Notes (p. 78). Meyer supported their incorporation within the text ('Les Manuscrits

français de Cambridge', p. 25). Crawford prints them without comment as her vv. 1255–70.

1376. As in the episode of the child who survived the boiling water (vv. 157–94), there is no clear source for the miracle related in vv. 1157–376 and it may derive from oral tradition. It does not appear in any of the versions that could have been known to Wace (see Ronsjö, pp. 44–45). This is a story of the defeat of the Devil and all his tricks (cf. vv. 1157–64). The Devil's speech in vv. 1210–38 is the longest stretch of direct speech in the entire poem and it allows Wace to demonstrate for his audience the Devil's eloquence and deviousness.

1389. The reading of this line is uncertain. MS has *Li seinz se laueient pur seinte*. The reading *vont* is taken from D (*Li sain i vont por devocion*).

1400. Le Saux mistakenly claims that the *Nicholas* presents Bari as the 'sole shrine possessing bodily relics of Nicolas' (*Companion*, p. 64); Wace emphatically identifies the true shrine as Myra.

1500. Ronsjö identifies the town as Sibinos, near Myra (p. 207) and discusses the name in the Greek and Latin traditions (p. 192). The name of the town in Wace's account varies according to the manuscripts: B has Sivin, O Sium and C Suun.

1545. The miracle told in vv. 1519–45 is not found in B. Ronsjö considered it to be authentic (see his note to v. 1519) and his text is based on O (the episode is also found in A and is included in the editions by Monmerqué and Delius, but not in that by Crawford).

1546. This line ('Ci falt le livre mestre Guace') is also found at the conclusion of the *Rou* ('Ci faut le livre Maistre Wace', III, v. 11339).

1562. See note to v. 182 of the *Margaret*.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Presented here in English translation for the first time, Wace's three hagiographical poems enrich our understanding of his career as a writer and demonstrate the extraordinary range of his literary achievement. These works represent three different subgenres of hagiographical writing: *enfances* and other forms of biography (the *Conception Nostre Dame*—hereafter *CND*), *passio* (the *Life of St Margaret*) and miracle collections (the *Life of St Nicholas*).[1] The first two of these works were written towards the beginning of Wace's career, probably sometime between 1130 and 1140. The third may have been composed a little later, perhaps around the time of his first chronicle, the *Roman de Brut*, which was completed in 1155. However, regardless of their chronology, the three hagiographical poems all demonstrate the author's highly developed literary skills, including his capacity for personal research, a quality that becomes especially prominent both in the *Brut* and in his last work, the *Roman de Rou* (ca. 1160–74). Together the five works provide irrefutable evidence of the key role their author played in the early development of French literature. Based on the sheer number of manuscript witnesses alone (for his five works, seventy complete, nearly complete or fragmentary manuscripts survive), Wace earns a place among the major writers of his time, a writer whose influence on contemporary authors of many genres was considerable.[2]

In terms of the quantity of his surviving output as a twelfth-century French vernacular writer, Wace, with his three saints' Lives and two chronicles, has few rivals. His contemporary, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, composed a *roman d'antiquité* (the *Roman de Troie*) and a chronicle (the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*) and Chrétien de Troyes wrote five Arthurian romances, some

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[1] *Enfances* is the medieval genre that seeks to complete what is well known about historical or legendary figures by providing details of their birth, lineage and childhood exploits that are not found elsewhere. Works belonging to the genre of *passio* recount the suffering and martyrdom of a saint. Miracle collections comprise a broad-ranging genre, including personal narratives and material recorded from oral tales and legends, often, though not exclusively, pertaining to saints recently dead or to figures being considered for canonisation.

[2] See, for example, Margaret Pelan, *L'Influence du Brut de Wace sur les romanciers français de son temps*, and Ernest Hoepffner, who claims that Marie de France's geographical and historical allusions almost all derive from Wace ('La Géographie et l'histoire dans les *Lais* de Marie de France'). In numerical terms, Wace's works surpass the five Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes, which are extant in around fifty manuscripts.

lyric poems and also perhaps a short narrative (*Philomena*) and a further romance (*Guillaume d'Angleterre*). However, with regard to the types of works involved, parallels to Wace's career trajectory are more easily found among Latin writers such as William of Malmesbury (ca. 1095/96–1143), whose historical production (primarily the *Gesta regum Anglorum* and the *Gesta pontificum*) together with his religious works (among them his Latin translation of Coleman's English *Life of Wulfstan* and his Miracles of the Virgin) have earned him the distinction of being the foremost Latin historian of the twelfth century.[3] Fellow historians and hagiographers writing in England at the time also include Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–67) (most notably the *Relatio de standardo*, ca. 1154, and the *Vita s. Eduardi*, ca. 1163) and Eadmer of Canterbury (ca. 1064–1124), the biographer of St Anselm, whose *Historia novorum in Anglia* was one of Wace's sources for the *Rou* and who composed the first treatise to argue for the redefining of the conception of the Virgin as 'immaculate' (see pp. 32–34 and n. 36 above).[4]

Indeed, like these Latin authors, Wace's influence was felt not only in the realms of literature and secular history, for the three hagiographical works presented here also made a substantive contribution to the cult of a widely popular saint. The *CND*, the earliest French cycle on the conception, childhood, genealogy, death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary, holds a major place in the early development of vernacular hagiography and religious polemic. It both reveals and promotes growing movements among the clergy and the people to celebrate the Virgin more universally, arguing for the permanent establishment of the feast of the Conception and providing more substantiation for the Assumption. By interweaving

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[3] Coleman's *Life of Wulfstan* (who was not canonised until 1203) is no longer extant and only survives in William of Malmesbury's translation, the *Vita Wulfstani*.

[4] That Wace's career trajectory resembled more closely that of Latin colleagues than of other writers in Old French may have affected the quality of his authorial voice in the histories, though in a less central way than generic conventions, the nature of the material or the audiences themselves. That is, although an innovator as a vernacular historian in virtually uncharted territory, Wace may have viewed his role as more secure against the backdrop of the longstanding and well-established Latin historiographical tradition—though of dynastic history rather than ecclesiastical. Even though the Latin hagiographical tradition was also well established, it is not impossible that he may have been less confident as an innovator in the field of vernacular hagiography if authorial roles had been perceived in that very early period as less clearly defined than they were for historians. On the interrelationships between audience, generic conventions and authorial voice in western and eastern historiography and hagiography, see Catherine Cubitt, 'Introduction: Writing True Stories—A View from the West', and Derek Krueger, 'Early Byzantine Historiography and Hagiography as Different Modes of Christian Practice', in *Writing 'True Stories'*, pp. 1–12, 13–20.

apocryphal material with better-known biblical traditions, Wace sought to fill in the 'informational gaps' in the Bible on the subject of the history of the life of the Virgin. He provided a means whereby the members of his French-speaking audience, who were not literate in Latin, could obtain a clearer picture of a number of aspects of the Virgin's life. These include the genealogy of St Anne and Mary that explains the nature of Jesus's 'brothers' and promotes a Davidic line for Jesus through both Mary and Joseph. Thus, the exaltation of the Virgin, which increased considerably in the twelfth century, owed a great deal to Wace, who contributed significantly to the growing centrality of the Virgin in Christian belief and liturgical practice.

Both the *Life of St Margaret* and the *Life of St Nicholas* made important contributions both to the writing of vernacular hagiography and to the fabric of the worship of these two saints in western Europe. In addition to its chronological status as the oldest extant French Life in octosyllabic rhymed couplets, the *Margaret* is, in terms of the development of the saint's cult, the oldest surviving vernacular Life to include the saint's patronage of women in labour, and not just of the infant being born. By making this association in a language accessible to all levels of society, Wace enriched Margaret's cult in a vital and universalising way. Indeed, the way in which he singles out women in the epilogue to the *Margaret* underscores a pattern in his writing that merits further exploration, especially alongside his presentation of the Virgin. Taken together, the *CND* and the *Margaret* illustrate a devotion to both the well-being and the spiritual power of women.

Wace's *Nicholas* can be seen as enhancing the traditional representation of the saint as thaumaturge, i.e. as miracle worker. Just as in collections of the Miracles of the Virgin, the biographical burden in the *Nicholas* is borne by the juxtaposition of a wide variety of miracles that are based on certain themes, rather than through biographical details or the demonstration of inner thought processes. As argued in the Introduction to the *Nicholas*, the range of those who benefit from Nicholas's good works—across class, age, religion, time and place—further contributes to a sense of the saint's awe-inspiring sanctity. Wace's decision to place frequent emphasis on the plight of children in this work creates a compelling link with his presentation of the spiritual power of women and the sanctity of childbirth. Moreover, from a more worldly point of view, his illustration of the importance of correcting injustice and recovering wealth that had been unjustly lost may have further advanced the cult of Nicholas as patron saint of merchants. The maturity of the author's craft by this

stage in his career includes numerous techniques for actively engaging the audience and it further signals, in both the social and literary arenas, an increasingly dynamic relationship between hagiographers and lay audiences.

Scholars who have overlooked the place of Wace's works within religious history and the broader genre of hagiography, merely comparing them instead to his secular histories, have understandably found them to be somewhat inadequate. They have even dismissed them as lacking in any interest beyond the philological. The hagiographical poems are not only substantially shorter but, when compared with the later histories, they also present notable differences in authorial persona. Rather than seeing the hagiographical texts as merely a 'primitive' stage in Wace's literary evolution, we would like to argue that it was the expectations of historians and their audiences that evoked the much more visible authorial persona of his chronicles in comparison with that found in his hagiographical poems.[5] In addition, although writing history for the royal court was always a delicate matter, in some ways writing on hagiographical, apocryphal and liturgical topics under the eyes of the Church, as a secular cleric for a largely lay audience, added yet another layer of complexity, which may have contributed to the more restrained authorial voice or persona of the hagiographies.

Despite this restraint, however, Wace's hagiographical works are distinguished by many of the rhetorical strategies that will be found in his chronicles, including (i) a tendency to use direct speech in order to dramatise scenes that in his Latin sources are often recounted by third-person narrators, (ii) anaphora (the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses), thus producing what are often referred to as his 'lyrical tirades',[6] (iii) juxtapositions of synonymous terms (primarily

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[5] Not unrelated to this argument is Le Saux's suggestion that 'the relative absence of certain mannerisms associated with the Wace of the *Roman de Brut* or the *Roman de Rou* should rather be ascribed to the poet's versatility and his sensitivity to the texts he was handling than to an as-yet undeveloped personal style' (*Companion*, p. 12).

[6] Examples of this technique, seen first in the *Margaret* (vv. 284–85, 549–53, 631–38 etc.), then more extensively in the *Nicholas* (vv. 36–42, 143–50, 317–22, 1149–54 etc.) and most extensively in the *CND* (vv. 41–44, 79–80, 101–02, 135–38 etc.), are often cited from the *Brut*, such as the well-known passage that explains why people travelled far and wide in order to come to King Arthur's court. Here words are repeated at the head of successive poetic lines: 'Tant pur Artur, tant pur ses duns, / Tant pur cunustre ses baruns,/ Tant pur veeir ses mananties, / Tant pur oïr ses curteisies, / Tant pur amur, tant pur banie,/ Tant pur enur, tant pur baillie' (vv. 10331–336). Although Wace is undoubtedly best known for the stylistic traits seen in the *Brut* and the *Rou*, it is noteworthy that, with respect to the

in this case in the *Nicholas*),[7] (iv) antitheses (the pairing of opposite terms in order to create either/or situations) and (v) apostrophe (a rhetorical device used to address directly an absent or imaginary person or object as if alive and present, and capable of replying).[8] In addition, although the *Margaret* is the oldest surviving Old French saint's Life in octosyllabic rhymed couplets, some readers may find in it a surprising number of variations from what are thought of as traditional rhyme and rhythm patterns (see p. 182 above). Also, not surprisingly since it is the latest of the three hagiographical poems, the *Nicholas* demonstrates an increased frequency of passages in which the various rhetorical and stylistic strategies are woven together with the intention of breaking the flow of the narrative: broken couplets, enjambment, direct discourse, apostrophe and rhetorical questions. This has the effect of maintaining audience engagement, through exposure to shifting rhythms and varied types of discourse (see pp. 176, 182–83 and 265–70 above).

On one level, while Wace's literary 'signature' (or style) can be gleaned from the patterns created through his use of the rhetorical strategies to which we have just referred (and there are others), another approach to understanding this author's craft is via the concept of authorial voice or authorial persona, that is, the image authors wish to create of themselves. As already noted (see pp. 2, 48 and n. 63), Wace can be considered as one of the most self-conscious of all twelfth-century writers, especially if we define 'self-consciousness' as the cumulative effect of self-referential interventions (occurring notably in the *Brut* and the *Rou* but also found in the hagiographical writings). Although scholars have questioned the extent to which we should take such comments in medieval literature at face value,[9] it remains difficult not to read Wace's authorial interventions

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repetition of entire phrases, Ronsjö (ed., p. 23 and n. 1) reports 62 instances in the *CND*, 41 in the *Nicholas*, 39 in the *Brut* and 35 in the *Rou* (he does not provide the figure for the *Margaret*). On repetition at the head of successive lines, see Ronsjö, p. 24 n. 1. On Wace's 'lyrical tirades', see Warren, 'Some Features of Style', p. 655, Arnold (ed. *Brut*, p. xci and n. 1), Grossel, 'Wace, traducteur des vies de saints', p. 202 ff., and p. 267 above.

[7] On the repetition of synonymous terms, Ronsjö's count is 14 instances for the *Margaret*, 42 for the *CND*, 64 for the *Brut*, 76 for the *Rou* and 77 for the *Nicholas* (ed., p. 23 n. 2). When considering stylistic traits in terms of the evolution of a writer's rhetorical repertoire, this tally supports the suggestion that the *Nicholas* could have been a later work in Wace's career rather than an earlier one.

[8] In a medieval context, since many works were read or performed aloud, there may well have been interlocutors present who were able to reply.

[9] David Hult, for example, proposes that in courtly romances there is no self-depiction or self-expression of a personal kind: 'Authorial self-consciousness in these texts entails neither self-depiction nor self-expression of a personal kind (both of which are largely

as conveying at least a glimmer of personal reality. For example, Wace's declarations that he knew three Henrys and was a *clerc lisant* in their time (*Rou*, III, vv. 179–80, 11431–32), or that he was born in Jersey, sent to Caen in Normandy as a boy and later to France (i.e. the Île-de-France) in order to further his education (*Rou*, III, vv. 5305–08), could conceivably be expressions alluding more generally to the role or the background of a vernacular historian. However, when taken collectively with the other self-references (mainly in the *Rou*), they appear as part of a pattern that evokes a personal element in a more than symbolic or metaphoric way.[10]

This pattern nonetheless presents notable variations between the secular chronicles and the hagiographical texts. In the hagiographies, unlike in the later works, Wace gives prominence to saintly virtues with a distanced and restrained authorial voice that for the most part lacks the sustained effort found in the chronicles, where his intention is to articulate directly his justifications for research decisions and narrative choices.[11] We would like to suggest that this difference in persona stems from the fact that in hagiography the focus of authority is less on the author's desire to set forth his various sources than on the material itself, the events and the characters/historical figures, thereby demonstrating his own credentials. The authorial persona is not—and must not be (except in passing)—front and centre, an object of audience attention *per se*. In the *CND*, the *Margaret* and the *Nicholas* the authorial persona is not seen as interrupting the flow of the narrative as often as in the chronicles, or as interjecting 'personalised' details. Hence, we are not so frequently reminded of the authorial presence, or of the author's persona as he wished to convey it. Instead, Wace tries to guide his audience towards important beliefs and, at times, liturgical practices. For example, on the occasions in the *CND* when we hear the 'I' of the authorial persona it is to state beliefs that are

absent from the corpus [of courtly romance]' ('Author/Narrator/Speaker: The Voice of Authority in Chrétien's *Charrette*', p. 80). Hult also views Wace's statements about his own poverty in the *Rou* as impersonal remarks intended 'to evoke the larger question of the economic constraints governing the production of literary and historical works', rather than as a direct expression of the author's financial straits (*ibid.*).

[10] See Blacker, 'Narrative Decisions and Revisions in the *Roman de Rou*'.

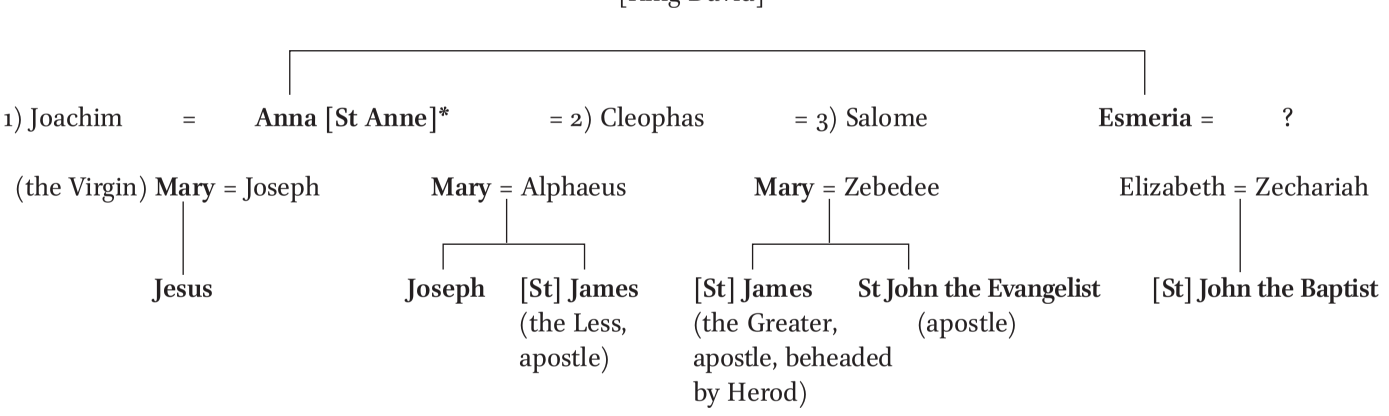
[11] Peter Damian-Grint notes that while Wace is unusual in not openly naming his sources in the *Brut* and the *Rou* (or very rarely, at least in contrast with Latin historians of the period), 'the pervasive indirect authorisation by means of the interjections of certainty, belief, and particularly ignorance serves both to confirm the authorisation which is direct and also, no less importantly, to create a scholarly climate in which the audience, even when not being forced to advert to the author's fidelity to the *auctoritates*, is gently but almost constantly reminded of the objectivity of the account' (*The New Historians*, p. 171).

on one level personal, but more importantly also represent recommended and universalised beliefs and values, such as the statement concerning the belief in the bodily Assumption of the Virgin: 'Se l'om demande que je crei /. . ./ De ce respondrai je briément: / Ce crei qu'ele est resuscitee' (vv. 1740, 1744–45). Even an isolated remark such as the declaration of his Norman identity (*Nicholas*, v. 35), while it resonates with the personal interventions of the secular chronicles, may—in the hagiographical works—serve more to express solidarity with his audience, identifying Nicholas with Normandy and with Wace's patron.

Just as the authorial persona of the hagiographical works should not be considered as a 'primitive' stage in Wace's development on the way to the 'fuller disclosure' seen in the persona of the chronicles, but rather as a reflection of the varied goals of the different genres of hagiographical texts and historiography, it is important to recognise the literary mastery that characterises these early works. Although often considered as Wace's 'minor' works, the *CND*, the *Margaret* and the *Nicholas* are major writings in three of the growing and varied subgenres of hagiography. The fact that Wace wrote three very different texts—a childhood biography as part of a network of often polemical apocryphal enhancements to standard teachings in the gospels (*CND*), a martyr narrative (*Margaret*) and a collection of miracles (*Nicholas*)—is also indicative of this author's range and his contributions to the literary landscape of the twelfth century. As research moves forward in areas ostensibly as disparate as authorial persona, narrativity, women's studies and the history of spirituality, Wace's contributions will furnish very distinctive evidence for a much broader picture of narrative craft and vernacular spiritual culture in the medieval period.

APPENDIX

Genealogy of Anna (St Anne) and (the Virgin) Mary, according to Wace's *Conception Nostre Dame* (*Histoire des Trois Maries*, vv. 1135–1292)


[King David]
1) Joachim = Anna [St Anne]* = 2) Cleophas = 3) Salome
Esmeria = ?
(the Virgin) Mary = Joseph
Mary = Alphaeus
Mary = Zebedee
Elizabeth = Zechariah
Jesus
Joseph
[St] James (the Less, apostle)
[St] James (the Greater, apostle, beheaded by Herod)
St John the Evangelist (apostle)
[St] John the Baptist

1) Joachim: Anna's first husband
2) Cleophas: Anna's second husband
3) Salome: Anna's third husband

*NB: Wace refers to St Anne most frequently as 'Anna' (cf. vv. 1135, 1143, 'sainte Anna'; vv. 493, 1183, 'Anne'); Mary as 'Marie,' 'sainte Marie,' 'nostre dame,' 'nostre dame sainte Marie,' or 'la sainte virgene'; St James the Less as 'Jacobus apostɛles' (v. 1161); St James the Greater as 'Le graignor Jaque' (v. 1190); St John the Evangelist as 'saint Johan(z) l'evangeliste'; and St John the Baptist as simply 'Johan(z) baptiste(s)'

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INDICES

INDEX I

This Index lists the personal and geographical names found in Wace's three hagiographical works. Forms given here are those used in the English translations; Old French forms, where they differ, have been placed in brackets. Occurrences given in square brackets are present in the translation, but not in the text.

CND = Conception Nostre Dame; M = Life of St Margaret; N = Life of St Nicholas

Aaron, *CND*, 1017. A prophet; brother of Moses. In Biblical tradition, Aaron's rod (along with that of Moses) was reported to have miraculous powers during the Plagues that preceded the Exodus.
Abraham (Habraam), *CND*, 348.
Alexandria (Alisandre), *N*, 297. Mediterranean seaport on the north coast of Egypt.
Alphaeus (Alfeüm, Alfeüs), *CND*, 1158, 1159. Husband of the second of the three Marys; father of Joseph and James the Less.
Andrew (Andreus), St, *CND*, 1441. One of the twelve apostles.
Anna (Anne), St, *CND*, 186, 190, 367, 384, 422, 425, 441, 451, 455, 469, 485, 493, 497, 499, 505, 551, 552, 555, 567, 579 (581 in the text), 1135, 1143, 1153. Wife of Joachim and mother of the three Marys.
Antioch (Antioche), *M*, 20, 33, 88, 132, 721. See the Introduction to *Margaret*, pp. 163–64.
Apollonius (Apollonies, Apolonies), *N*, 994, 995. Bishop of Excoranda.
Armenia (Armene), *M*, 583. Country in southern Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. See the note to *Margaret*, v. 583.
Armenian (Ermine), *CND*, 1548.
Arpelion, *N*, 462. One of the three counts imprisoned by Constantine.

Babylon (Babiluine), *M*, 490. A city-state of ancient Mesopotamia. Its ruins are located at Al Hillah, Iraq, 55 miles south of Baghdad.
Baptist (Baptiste, Baptistes), *CND*, 1140, 1195: see John the Baptist.
Bartholomew (Bertelemeus), St, *CND*, 1443. One of the twelve apostles.
Beelzebub (Belsabut), *M*, 413. A devil. More broadly, the Philistine god of Accaron, near Jerusalem, who appears in the Old Testament as an oracle. In the New Testament his name is another name for Satan (Matthew 12:24–29, Luke 11:15–22). See the note to *Margaret*, v. 413.
Bethlehem (Bethleem), *CND*, 740, 772, 1004. Traditional birthplace of Jesus.

Cethron (Getro), *N*, 935, 951, 963, 979, 987, 998, 1003, 1069, 1076. Husband of Euphrosina and father of Deudoné.
Christ: see Jesus Christ.
Christian, Christians, *M*, 28, 91, 94, 295, 423.
Christianity (crestienté), *M*, 424.
Cleophas (Cleofam), *CND*, 1156, 1183. Second husband of Anna; father of the second of the three Marys.
Constantine (Constantin), *N*, 302, 459, 535. The emperor Constantine the Great (323–337 AD).

Danes (Daneis), *CND*, 19, 38, 49.
David (Davit, Latin Davi), *CND*, 723, 724, 730, 978. King of Israel.
December (Decembre), *CND*, 132, 142.
Dedication (Dedicacion), *CND*, 221. A Jewish festival at the temple of Solomon.

Denmark (Danesmarche), *CND*, 36, 46.
Deudoné, *N*, 1001, 1011, 1049, 1053, 1061, 1072, 1083. Son of Cethron and Euphrosina.
Diana (Diane), *N*, 343, 349, 359, 361, 377, 397, 421, 436. The Ephesian goddess Artemis. See the note to *Nicholas*, v. 349.

Egypt (Egipte, Latin Egypto), *CND*, 521, 1030, 1607.
Elizabeth (Elisabet, Elisabeth, Helisabeth), St, *CND*, 848, 882, 889, 904, 1126, 1137. Wife of Zechariah and mother of John the Baptist.
England (Engleterre), *CND*, 23, 156.
English (Engleis), *CND*, 12, 18.
Eparc, *N*, 460, 519, 537. Prefect of the emperor Constantine (Latin form Ablavius).
Ephesus (Ephase, Ephese), *CND*, 1390, 1468. An ancient Greek city on the west coast of Anatolia.
Esmeria, *CND*, 1136. Sister of Anna and mother of Elizabeth.
Euphrosina (Eüfrosine), *N*, 945, 1004, 1081. Wife of Cethron and mother of Deudoné.
Eva (Eve), *CND*, 1092, 1100, 1102, 1104, 1106, 1107. The first woman created by God.
Evangelist (Evangeliste), *CND*, 1196: see John the Evangelist.
Excoranda (Escoranda), *N*, 937, 1054. Home of Cethron and Euphrosina.

Gabriel, Sainz, *CND*, 785, 804, 835, 1537. One of the two chief archangels.
Galilee, *CND*, 189, 778, 1188. A region of northern Israel.
Greek (Grec), *CND*, 1548.

Harold (Aralt, Aralz), *CND*, 16, 20, 25. Harold Godwinson (ca. 1020–1066); King of England for nine months in 1066.
Helsin (Elsin, Helcim, Helcin, Helsim), *CND*, 39, 53, 58, 101, 105, 108, 111, 119, 127, 159 (160 in text). Abbot of Ramsey. See the note to v. 42 of the *CND*.
Herod (Herodes), *CND*, 1192 (1191 in text). Herod Antipas, King of Judaea (before 20 BC–after 39 AD), son of Herod the Great (73/74 BC–4BC).
Holy Ghost (Saint Esprit, Sainz Espriz), *CND*, 419, 527, 713; *M*, 31, 355, 538, 559, 661.

Iacob, *CND*, 1608: see Jacob.
Isaac, *CND*, 350, 484. Son of Sarah and Abraham.
Isaiah (Ysaïe), *CND*, 710, 711. Prophet.
Israel (Jacob), *CND*, 518.
Israel (lineage, people, region), *CND*, 262, 446, 1607.
Issachar (Isacar), *CND*, 233, 255, 336. Bishop of the temple in which the Virgin Mary spent part of her youth.

Jacob (Iacob, Latin form), *CND*, 353, 1608. Husband of Rachel, father of Joseph.
James (the Less) (Jacobus, Jaque, Jaques), St, *CND*, 1160, 1161, 1179, 1441. Son of Mary and Alphaeus. One of the twelve apostles.
James (the Greater) (Jaque, Jaques), St, *CND*, 1190, 1442. Son of Mary and Zebedee. One of the twelve apostles.
Jerusalem (Jherusalem, Jherussalem), *CND*, 383, 541, 556, 739, 1181, 1617; *M*, 491. The ancient capital of Judaea.
Jesse, *CND*, 713, 719, 724. Father of King David. It was predicted that the messiah would come from the 'root of Jesse' (Isaiah 11:10).
Jesus (Christ) (Jesu, Jesum, Jhesu, Jhesum, Jhesus; Crist, Christum), *CND*, 379, 400, 988, 989, 991, 1142, 1162, 1198, 1206, 1327, 1162, 1197, 1206, 1332, 1413, 1492, 1534, 1553, 1591, 1695, 1716, 1760; *M*, 108, 136, 137, 178, 337, 351, 389, 421, 510, 688; *N*, 271, 574.
Jew(s), Jewish (Judeu, Jüeu, Jüeus, Juï, Juïs), *CND*, 220, 1407, 1631, 1634; *M*, 126, 138; *N*, 726, 729, 733, 742, 764, 769, 802, 806.
Joachim (Joachin, Johachim), St, *CND*, 185, 188, 227, 231, 235, 244, 256, 275, 281, 313, 324, 382, 388, 392, 421, 496, 554, 579 (581 in the text), 1149, 1151. Husband of Anna and father of the Virgin Mary.

John (Johan, Johanz) the Baptist, St, *CND*, 890, 1139, 1441,1195. Son of Elizabeth and Zechariah.
John (Johan) the Evangelist, Saint / Sainz, *CND*, 1193, 1196, 1211, 1217, 1259, 1279, 1287, 1389, 1400, 1416, 1419, 1441, 1457, 1467, 1578, 1588, 1601. Son of Mary and Zebedee, apostle and nephew of the Virgin Mary.
Jonah (Jonan, Jonas), *CND*, 1775, 1791. The prophet who was swallowed by a great fish.
Jordan (Jordain), *CND*, 892. River.
Josaphat / Jehoshaphat, Valley of, *CND*, 1717, 1734. See note to vv. 1717–18.
Joseph (Josep), *CND*, 355, 520. Son of Rachel and Jacob.
Joseph (Josep), St, *CND*, 739, 759, 764, 941, 948, 977, 978, 987, 993, 1003, 1119. Husband of the Virgin Mary.
Joseph (Josep), *CND*, 1160. Son of Mary and Alphaeus.
Judaea (Judé), *CND*, 886. An ancient region of southern Palestine, comprising the south of modern Israel and southwest Jordan.
Judas, *CND*, 1444. One of the twelve apostles.
Jude (Judes), St, *CND*, 1442. One of the twelve apostles.
Juno, *N*, 344. Roman goddess equivalent to the Greek Hera; sister and wife of Jupiter.
Jupiter, *N*, 342. King of the gods in Roman mythology and equivalent of the Greek Zeus; the god of sky and thunder.

Laban (Labam), *CND*, 518. Father of Rachel.
Lombardy (Lombardie), *N*, 1165.
Lucifer, *M*, 480. Satan's name before his fall. See the note to *Margaret*, v. 480.

Malcus, *M*, 600, 614. Margaret's executioner. See the note to *Margaret*, v. 600.
Margaret (Marguerite), *M*, 10, 37 (38 in text), [41], 73, 97, 134, 174, 194, 209, 239, 251, 304, 305 (306 in text), 333, 339, 365, 392, 401, 447, 468, 472, 475, 497, 509, 513, 520, 546, 569, 573, 673, 724, 733. St Margaret of Antioch.
Mars, *N*, 342. Roman warrior god.
Mary (Marie), *CND*, 6 (7 in text), 89, 122, 180, 369, 524, 569, 603, 605, 649, 652, 725, 765, 783, 787, 884, 903, 916, 980, 1009, 1070, 1085, 1091, 1109, 1112, 1127, 1149, 1282, 1464, 1624, 1682, 1759, [1796], 1809. The Virgin Mary. Also called sainte Marie, Nostre Dame and sainte V(i)ergene.
Mary (Marie), *CND*, 1157. The second Mary; daughter of Anna and Cleophas; wife of Alphaeus.
Mary (Marie), *CND*, 1186. The third Mary; daughter of Anna and Salomas; wife of Zebedee.
Marys, the three, *CND*, 1046.
Matthew (Matheus), St, *CND*, 1442. One of the twelve apostles.
Matthias (Mathias), St, *CND*, 1447. The apostle chosen by the remaining eleven apostles to replace Judas Iscariot after the latter's betrayal of Jesus. See Acts 1:15–26.
Mediacon, *N*, 376, 398. Name of the oil prepared by the goddess Diana.
Mercury (Mercurius), *N*, 342. Roman god equivalent to the Greek Hermes.
Michael (Michiel), Saint, *CND*, 1535–36. One of the two chief archangels.
Minerva, *N*, 344. Roman goddess equivalent to the Greek Athena.
Moses (Moïsés), *CND*, 1012.
Mount of Olives (Mont Olivet), *CND*, 1340. A mountain ridge east of the Old City of Jersusalem.
Mount Zion (Mont-en-Sion / Syon), *CND*, 1288, 1396, 1545. A hill just outside the Old City of Jerusalem.
Myra (Mire, Mirre), *N*, 123, 355, 472, 533, 1381, 1402. Capital of Lycia in Asia Minor.

Nativity (nativeté), *CND*, 140.
Nazareth (Nasaret, Nasareth, Nasereth, Nazaret), *CND*, 189, 778, 783, 881, 935, 948, 1125. City in the north of Israel; according to the New Testament, the childhood home of Jesus.

Nepocion, *N*, 462, 553, 576. One of the three counts imprisoned by Constantine (Latin form Nepotianus).
Nicholas, *N*, 37, [45], 58, 75, 77, 95, 115, 121, 149, 153, 157, 194, 211, 217, 221, 248, 249, 256, 260, 269, 274, 281, 285, 303, 329, 357, 360, 370, 384, 388, 406, 439, 468, 515, 533, 570, 571, 575, 577, 585, 588 [590], 619, 651, 669, 677, 697, 717, 736, 770, 791, 797, 813, 828, 835, 858, 872, 900, 917, 931, 933, 957, 964, 980, 1005, 1008, 1037, 1044, 1052, 1058, 1062, 1078, 1084, 1088, 1090, 1095, 1111, 1143, 1154, 1167, 1280, 1307, 1329, 1345, 1353, 1361, 1374, 1377, 1411, 1464, 1480, 1501, 1506, 1509, 1535, 1547, 1550. St Nicholas, bishop of Myra.
Nineveh (Ninive), *CND*, 1776. A city in ancient Assyria on the eastern bank of the river Tigris, across the river from the modern city of Mosul, Iraq.
Normans (Normanz), *CND*, 18, 24.

Olybrius (Olibrius), *M*, 85, 87, 127, 193, 253, 529, 541, 579. Roman prefect and Margaret's adversary and torturer. See the note to *Margaret*, v. 85.

Patara (Patras), *N*, 45. A town in the province of Lycia in south-west Anatolia.
Peter (Piere, Pieres), Saint / Sainz, *CND*, 1441, 1579, 1587, 1602–03, 1666, 1670, 1675, 1691, 1701. One of the St, twelve apostles.
Philip, St, *CND*, 1443. One of the twelve apostles.
Phoebus (Phebus), *N*, 341. Greek and Roman god, often known as Phoebus Apollo.

Rachel, *CND*, 353, 355, 517. Daughter of Laban, wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph.
Ramsey (Ramesi, Ramesie), *CND*, 40, 168. Benedictine abbey in Cambridgeshire.
Robert fitz Tout (Robert le fiz Tiout), *N*, 1549. A Norman lord, patron of Wace's *Nicholas*. See the Introduction to *Nicholas*, p. 240.
Rome, *M*, 89; N, 486.
Rufo (Rufun), *M*, 369, 420. A dragon; brother of Beelzebub. See Keller, ed. of *Margaret*, p. 118, and the note to *Margaret*, v. 369.

Salome (Salomas), *CND*, 1184. Third husband of Anna and father of the third of the three Marys.
Samson (Sanson), *CND*, 358. Biblical character of tremendous strength. See Judges chapters 13–16.
Samuel, *CND*, 357. Son of Hannah; first of the major prophets of the Land of Israel.
Sarah (Sarra, Sarram), *CND*, 482, 515. Mother of Isaac.
Satan (Sathan, Sathanas), *M*, 326, 477, 479.
Sepphoris (Saforie), *CND*, 190. A village in central Galilee, north west of Nazareth; birthplace of Anna.
September (Setembre), *CND*, 141.
Sibinos (Sivin), *N*, 1500. A town near Myra.
Simon (Symon), St, *CND*, 1444. One of the twelve apostles.
Solomon (Salamon, Salamuns), *CND*, 222; *M*, 488. Son of King David; celebrated for his wisdom.
Syrian (Suriën), *CND*, 1548.

Theodimus, *M*, 720, 723, 740. Author of the *Passio sancte Margarite virginis*, which may have been one of Wace's sources for his *Margaret*.
Theodosius, *M*, 22, 47. The father of Margaret.
Thomas, St, *CND*, 1443. One of the twelve apostles.
Tiout, *N*, 1549. See Robert fitz Tiout.

Urs, *N*, 463. One of the three counts imprisoned by Constantine (Latin form Ursus).
Uten, *CND*, 439, 456, 463, 470. Anna's chambermaid.

Venus, *N*, 344. Roman goddess.
Virgin Mary; see Mary.

Wace (Gace, Guace), *CND*, 2, 1111; *M*, 738; *N*, 35, 1546. The author Wace.
William (Guillalme, Guillalmes), *CND*, 11, 17, 27, 45. William I, the Conqueror.

Zebedee, *CND*, 1187. Husband of the third Mary; father of James the Greater and John the Evangelist.
Zechariah (Zacharie, Zaquarie, Zaquaries), St, *CND*, 883, 885, 913, 1138. A priest and husband of Elizabeth; father of John the Baptist.
Zion: see Mount Zion.

INDEX II

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